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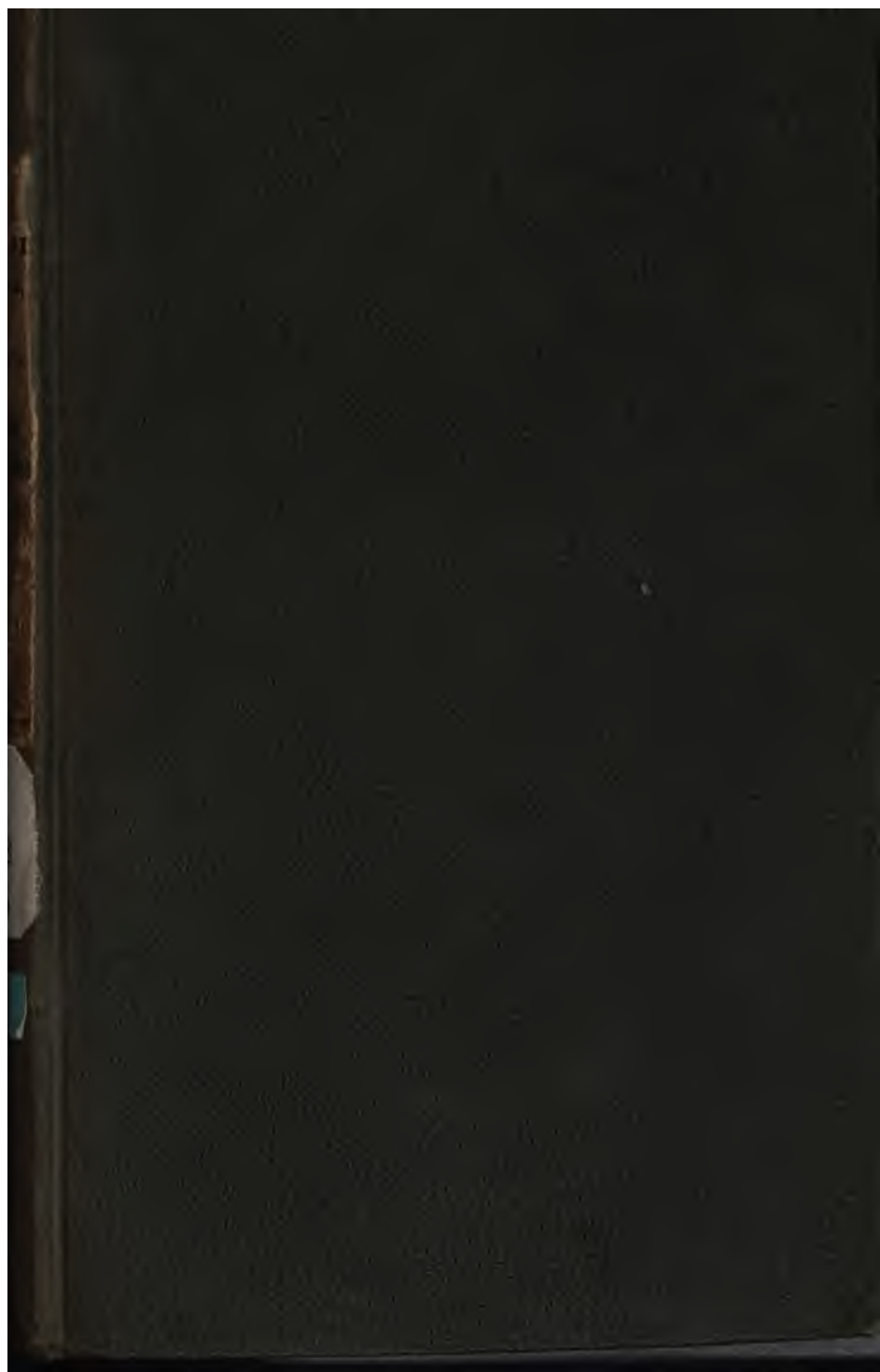
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Grant, James

THE
BRITISH SENATE;
OR,
A SECOND SERIES
OF
RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS
OF THE
LORDS AND COMMONS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE GREAT METROPOLIS," "THE BENCH AND
THE BAR," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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1838.

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P R E F A C E.

144
In presenting the public with a Second Series of "Random Recollections of the Lords and Commons," the author begs to state, that he has done everything in his power to insure the greatest possible accuracy in his statements. The difficulty of avoiding errors in a work embracing so many statements and facts, and which is entirely original, can be known only to those who have been employed on similar productions. The author deems it unnecessary to repeat what he stated in his preface to "The Bench and the Bar," namely, that he has been most anxious to guard against anything like ill-natured remark, and that his earnest desire has been to write in the spirit of perfect impartiality.

The author has only further to express his

grateful sense of the very extraordinary success of the former series of the work—a success which he believes to be altogether unexampled in modern times.

London, May 7, 1838.

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BOOK I.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

OPENING OF THE VICTORIA PARLIAMENT.

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I do not know that I could more fitly commence a Second Series of my "Random Recollections of the Lords and Commons," than by some descriptive and general observations respecting the opening of the Victoria Parliament. Everything of importance connected with that parliament will occupy a prominent place in the page of history. As one, therefore, who had peculiar opportunities of seeing to advantage everything connected with the meeting of the first legislature of our virgin Queen, I am sure I shall be doing an acceptable service to the public by devoting a certain portion of my pages to it.

The day appointed for that meeting, was Wednesday, November the 15th, 1837. In the House of Lords the proceedings were confined to the usual formality of reading her Majesty's writ,—the Commons being assembled at their Lordships' bar,—authorizing the assembling of the new parliament. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and the early part of Monday, were occupied with swearing in the Peers. The oaths taken on these occasions are two: the oath of allegiance, and that which disclaims all faith in the Roman Catholic religion. No member can take his seat, or vote on any question, until he has taken the first oath. The second, as a matter of course, is only taken by Protestants. For the Roman Catholic Peers, and the Roman Catholic Commons, a different oath is provided: they are made to swear that they will do nothing in their capacity of members of the legislature to deprive the Church of England of any part of its property, nor seek to injure it in any way. It was curious to witness the exposition lately given in the Lords, of the peculiar notions of particular individuals on the subject of the Roman Catholic religion. Lord Melbourne, Earl Mulgrave, and others of the more liberal Whigs, seemed, judging from the manner in which they uttered the words of the oath, to look upon it as of no very grave moment; while Lords Kenyon, Roden, Winchilsea, and others of the ultra Tory party, repeated the words with a seriousness of countenance, and an emphasis of manner, which showed that they felt all that they uttered. The oath in question disclaims all belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation, or in the propriety of praying to the Virgin Mary or

other saints. The praying to saints in the sacrifice of the mass, the parties taking the oath declare to be idolatrous. All acknowledgment of the authority of the Pope is also disclaimed. The Lord Chancellor sat as motionless and mute on the woolsack, while the two clerks were administering the oaths to the Peers, as if he had been a statue. I have often pitied the noble and learned Lord before, while doomed to hear the prosy speeches of certain Peers who shall be nameless; because, while other noble Lords can escape the visitation by quitting the House, he must remain in his place to hear every word they utter; and what is more, must, for the sake of courtesy, appear to listen with respectful attention to everything they say. Great, however, as has been my compassion for the Lord Chancellor on the occasions to which I refer, it never was half so great as when witnessing him on the woolsack during the four days he was compelled to sit there while the oaths were being administered to the Peers. His lordship's face is grave at any time: on the occasions to which I allude, it was peculiarly so. And no wonder; for what could be more tiresome than to have his ears dinned by hearing the same everlasting oaths so often repeated? Nonsensical speeches, if they have no other recommendation, have at least this one—that there is variety in them. Here all was an unbroken monotony; and what is more, a monotony of a very unpleasant kind. To be sure, a Peer, either on his entrance, or after he had taken the oaths and his seat, now and then advanced to the woolsack, and shook hands with the noble and learned lord; but this was scarcely worthy

of the name of variety. The most interesting little episode which occurred, while I was present, in the four days' *sederunt* of his lordship, took place when the new Bishop of Hereford was being admitted to the House as a spiritual Peer. One of the leading officers of the House whose duty it is to see that none but Peers be permitted to pass the bar, having observed the right reverend prelate standing outside the bar, with some other bishops behind him, while the Bishop of Durham who had undertaken to introduce him, was motioning him to follow,—sprang to the bar from the centre of the house where he chanced to be standing at the time, and inquired audibly of the right reverend prelate whether he had brought his writ with him?

"I have," answered the right reverend prelate: and as he spoke, he produced the important piece of paper.

"Then you may walk in," said the officer, opening the little iron door, and admitting his reverence.

The latter, preceded by the portly Bishop of Durham, and followed by another ecclesiastical dignitary, then advanced to the table of the house, where the clerks were in readiness to swear in the new member. One clerk stood on the ministerial side of the table, and the other on the Tory side. Whether this was indicative of the respective political views of the parties, or was the result of pure accident, or was agreeably to some usual arrangements, are points which I cannot decide; nor is the matter of much importance either way. I allude to the circumstance of the two clerks being thus, as regarded their local position, pitted against each other, for the purpose of mentioning that

the clerk on the ministerial side handed over to the one on the Tory side a small slip of paper carefully folded up. The latter opened the piece of paper, and began reading thus:—"To our trusty and well-beloved James, Earl of ———." Here he suddenly paused, and looked confounded. The fact flashed on him that he had been reading the wrong writ, and tossing it over to the clerk on the opposite side from whom he had received it, indicated by his looks that he thought his colleague had committed a very stupid blunder. The error, however, was forthwith rectified by the proper piece of paper being handed over to him whose duty on the occasion it was to read aloud the authority on which the new bishop was about to be recognised as a member. Instead of "the Earl of," the words "right reverend father in God" greeted the ears of every one present. The reverend prelate then proceeded to take the oaths, which having done, he laid down the paper and the New Testament on the table, and looked about him with a strangeness of manner which denoted that he was in a place which was new to him. A few seconds passed before the Bishop of Durham, who acted on the occasion as his "guide, philosopher, and friend," gave any indication of an inclination to move from the spot on which he stood. During this time the new spiritual Peer looked as if he had been saying in his own mind, "Well, I wonder what comes next!" The thing that came next was, that the Bishop of Durham, instead of going the nearest way to the bench of bishops, in order that the new-made spiritual legislator might comply with the form of "taking his seat," took the most cir-

outious way to the ecclesiastical locality which he possibly could,—the Bishop of Hereford and the other unknown bishop following his reverence with a most exemplary docility. The form of taking the seat having been gone through, the Bishop of Durham introduced the Bishop of Hereford to the Lord Chancellor, sitting, as before-mentioned, as if “the sole inhabitant of some desert isle,” on the woolsack. His Lordship seized the extended hand of the newly-admitted spiritual Peer with so much energy,—arising doubtless from the cordiality with which he congratulated him on being added to the members of the House,—that he almost pulled him down on his own knee. After about half a minute’s conversation with the noble and learned Lord, the Bishop of Hereford left the House in the company of his right reverend friends.

The opening of a new parliament by the sovereign in person, is at any time a most interesting circumstance, and never fails to attract a large concourse of persons, not only to the vicinity of the parliament-house, but to every part of the line of procession. The interest of such an occurrence was on this occasion greatly heightened by the circumstance of this being, not only the first parliament of the sovereign, but of that sovereign being an amiable female of the tender age of eighteen. Loyalty and gallantry, therefore, both combined to draw out the population of London, on the occasion of Victoria’s opening her first parliament in person. And as has hitherto been the case, on all the occasions in which our young Queen has appeared in public, the weather on the day in question was propitious in the highest

degree. Under all these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at if the assemblage of persons who greeted Victoria with their plaudits on her way to and from her parliament, was far greater—as I am convinced it was—than were ever congregated together under similar circumstances. I have witnessed the opening of several parliaments by the sovereign in person; but the concourse of people on such occasions was nothing to what it was on the present. From Buckingham Palace to the Horse Guards, there were two unbroken lines of persons as closely wedged together, ten or twelve deep, as it was possible for them to be; while from Charing Cross down to Abingdon Street,—a distance I should suppose of about half-a-mile,—the broad pavement on either side exhibited one dense mass of human beings. It is hardly necessary to say that the windows and tops of the houses, and every spot which could command a glimpse of the procession, were most thickly tenanted. In the fronts of most of the houses in Parliament Street, scaffoldings were erected, many of which were let out, while others were confined to the accommodation of friends. Palace Yard, again, exhibited one dense mass of cabs, coaches, carts, wagons, and vehicles of every kind, which were also let out for the occasion; and many a Jehu made a much more profitable couple of hours' work by letting out his vehicle in this way, than he would have done by driving about in the streets from morning to night with ordinary "fare." To compute with any thing like confidence of being near the mark, the number of persons who, on the 20th of November, were assembled together to get a glance of their young

sovereign, is what no man would undertake to do. Forming a rough conjecture on the subject, I should say it could not have been much under two hundred thousand.

So early as twelve o'clock, the interior of the House of Lords was quite full; and so great was the anxiety to obtain a view of the Queen while opening parliament, that even the gallery of the House of Lords was filled with the female branches of aristocratic families by half-past twelve; all, as in the body of the House, in full dress. . . . Lady Mary Montagu gives a graphic description of the siege which a troop of duchesses, countesses, and other titled ladies, laid to the door of the gallery of the House of Lords, when, in her time, some interesting debate was expected; and how when they found after a ten hours' assault, that the gallery was not to be taken by storm, they succeeded in effecting an entrance by stratagem. The ladies in the present case were not under the necessity of attempting an entrance into the gallery by sheer physical force; for they had in most cases procured a Lord Chamberlain's order of admission; but several of them effected an entrance by the persuasive eloquence of their pretty and fascinating faces, accompanied by a few honied words, which the officers could not resist; and which no man possessed of an atom of susceptibility, to say nothing of gallantry, could, had he been in the officers' places, have withstood. But this was not all: not only did a number of ladies who had no order of admission from the Lord Chamberlain, meet with this wonderful facility of entrance; but some of them carried the joke still further, and ac-

tually took forcible possession of the front seat in the gallery, which is always specially and exclusively appropriated to the gentlemen of the press. This seat is capable, on an emergency, of containing, including a back form, about thirty persons, and yet, in this case, only three reporters were fortunate enough to obtain admission; and even they, but for the accidental circumstance of having taken possession of their places the moment the door was thrown open, would also have been among the excluded. And what does the reader suppose would have been the consequence? Why, none other than this: that not one word of the ~~important~~ proceedings in the House of Lords, on the opening of the parliament by the Queen,—beyond a copy of the speech which is always sent from the government offices to the newspapers,—could have appeared in the next day's papers. Let the public imagine what an "untoward affair" this would have been, and be thankful that three gentlemen of the press were fortunate enough to secure their places in the gallery. The alacrity which the ladies displayed in possessing themselves of the seats set apart for the reporters, was truly astonishing. Philosophers tell us that nature abhors a vacuum, and that whenever one is created, she rushes in to fill it up. I am not myself philosopher enough to know with what expedition nature fills up such vacuums; but this I know, that she could not be much more prompt in her movements, than were the ladies in filling up the vacant seats intended for the gentlemen of the press, on this occasion. The three reporters already referred to, when they saw the rush of the ladies to take possession

of the unoccupied seats, felt in the first instance inexpressible surprise; but on recovering themselves, the predominant feeling in their minds was one of gratitude to their stars, that they had been fortunate enough to possess themselves of their places. There they sat for two long hours, amidst a large assemblage of the fairest of the fair, literally hid from the sight of those who were lucky enough to get a peep into the house from the door, by a forest of waving plumes of feathers of the richest kind. By one o'clock the House had an appearance which, I am convinced may be said with truth, it has seldom if ever presented before. The whole of the benches on the floor and the two side galleries, were occupied by the female portion of the families of the peers, all attired in their costliest and most magnificent dresses. I will not attempt to describe the effect produced on the mind of the spectator by the dazzling splendour of the jewellery they wore. Altogether, the spectacle was perhaps one of the most interesting of the kind ever witnessed in this or any other country. I have been in the House of Lords at the opening and proroguing of several previous parliaments by the sovereign in person; but on no former occasion was there any comparison with the scene in question, either as regarded the number of ladies present, or the imposing and brilliant aspect the place presented.

I could have wished that the opponents of Mr. Grantley Berkeley's motion for the admission of ladies into the gallery of the House of Commons, had been all present on this occasion: that is to say, provided there had been accommodation for them. There can be little

doubt that, as respects a considerable number of these ungallant "honourable gentlemen," the real cause, though they have not the courage to own it, of their opposition to the admission of ladies in the gallery is, that they labour under the impression that ladies could not refrain from speaking to one another, and would thus betray a want of proper respect for the House and its proceedings. As to the amount of respect which is due to the House and its proceedings, I beg to be excused from expressing an opinion; but this I feel bound to say, in justice to the sex, that the supposition that women could not, under any circumstances, refrain from speaking, is altogether groundless. It was proved to have been so on the occasion in question; and this under circumstances of a very trying nature; for all the ladies had to sit about two hours before the arrival of the Queen, and while there were no proceedings in the House; and yet every thing was as quiet as the most devoted admirer of the "silent system" could have wished. I do not mean to say that the ladies remained all this time as mute as if they had been so many statues; but this I will say, without the fear of contradiction, that when one exchanged a word with another, it was done in a perfect whisper, so as to be audible, with few exceptions, to no one but her to whom it was addressed. If, then, an unbroken silence was observed by the ladies present during the two tedious hours they were in the House without any thing in the shape of proceedings to occupy their attention, what a groundless and ungallant imputation for the members of the House of Commons to say—and I myself have heard members

say it in private—that if ladies were admitted into their gallery, they could not refrain from speaking!

A little before two o'clock, a discharge of artillery announced that her Majesty was on her way to parliament. The first round startled many a "lady fair," as might be seen by the sudden and somewhat ungraceful nodding of so many plumes of feathers; but the momentary surprise over, every countenance beamed with joy at the thought that a sovereign of their own sex would in a very little time be seated on the splendid throne before them. A short time passed away, and the striking-up of a band of music on the outside, announced the near approach of her Majesty. A few moments more elapsed, and the thrilling tones of the trumpet intimated that Queen Victoria, though as yet unseen, was proceeding along the passage to her robing-room, and would be in the midst of them presently. That was a moment of intense interest, and it was visibly depicted in every countenance. Every eye momentarily expected to gaze on the youthful Queen, attired in her robes of state. In a few seconds more, Victoria entered the House. The Peeresses and all present simultaneously rose, while every breast throbbed with exultation at the sight of their sovereign. It was a sight to be seen, not to be described. The most lively imagination would fall far short of the reality: how fruitless, then, were any effort to attempt to convey an idea of it by mere description. There stood, in the presence of their young and interesting sovereign,—all emulating each other in doing homage to her in their hearts as well as outwardly,—the Peers and Peeresses

of the land. It was a touching sight: it was a sublime spectacle: it was one which will never be forgotten by those whose happiness it was to witness it.

Her Majesty having taken her seat on the throne, desired the Peers to be seated. The intimation was known to be equally meant for the ladies. The Commons were then summoned into the royal presence. The summons was forthwith followed by a scene which strongly contrasted with that to which I have been alluding. There is a proverb, which is current in certain districts of the country, that some people are to be heard when they are not to be seen. The adage received a remarkable illustration in the case of the representatives of the people, on this occasion. No sooner had the door been opened, in obedience to the mandate of the Queen, which leads into the passage through which they had to pass on their way to the bar of the House of Lords, than you heard a patting of feet, as if it had been of the hoofs of some two or three score of quadrupeds. This, however, was only one of the classes of sounds which broke on the ears of all in the House of Lords, and even of those who were standing in the passages leading to it. There were loud exclamations of "Ah! ah!" and a stentorian utterance of other sounds, which denoted that the parties from whom they proceeded had been suddenly subjected to some painful visitation. All eyes—not even excepting the eyes of her Majesty—were instantly turned towards the door of the passage whence the sounds proceeded. Out rushed, towards the bar of the House of Lords, a torrent of members of the Lower House, just as if the

place which they had quitted had been on fire, and they had been escaping for their lives. The cause of the strange, if not alarming sounds which had been heard a moment or two before, was now sufficiently intelligible to all. They arose from what Mr. O'Connell would call the mighty struggle among the members, as to who should reach the House of Lords first, and by that means get the nearest to the bar, and thereby obtain the best place for seeing and hearing. In this mortal competition for a good place, the honourable gentlemen exhibited as little regard for each other's persons, as if they had been the principal performers in some exhibition of physical energy in Donnybrook Fair. They squeezed each other, jammed each other, trod on each other's gouty toes, and "punished" each other, as the professors of the pugilistic art phrase it, in every variety of form, without the slightest compunctious visiting. Hence the exclamations—in some cases absolute roars—to which I have alluded. The most serious sufferer, so far as I have been able to learn, was one of the honourable members for Sheffield, who had his shoulder dislocated in the violent competition to be first at the bar. Even after the M. P.'s were fairly in the presence of their sovereign, there was a great deal of jostling and jamming of each other, which extorted sundry exclamations indicative of pain, though such exclamations were less loud than those before alluded to. The Irish members played the most prominent part in this unseemly exhibition; and next to them, the English ultra Radicals. The Tories cut but a sorry figure in the jostling match. The Liberals were, as the common saying is, "too many

for them." I thought with myself at the time, what must the foreign ambassadors and their ladies who were present think of English manners, should they unhappily form their notions on the subject from the conduct on this occasion of the legislators in the Lower House? It was a rather awkward exhibition for a body of men arrogating to themselves the character of being "the first assembly of gentlemen in Europe."

Her Majesty having taken the oath against Popery, which she did in a slow, serious, and audible manner, proceeded to read the royal speech; and a specimen of more tasteful and effective elocution it has never been my fortune to hear. Her voice is clear, and her enunciation distinct in no ordinary degree. Her utterance is timed with admirable judgment to the ear: it is the happy medium between too slow and too rapid. Nothing could be more accurate than her pronunciation; while the musical intonations of her voice imparted a peculiar charm to the other attributes of her elocution. The most perfect stillness reigned through the place while her Majesty was reading her speech. Not a breath was to be heard: had a person, unblessed with the power of vision, been suddenly taken within hearing of her Majesty, while she was reading her speech, he might have remained some time under the impression that there was no one present but herself. Her self-possession was the theme of universal admiration. Nothing could have been more complete. The most practised speaker in either House of Parliament never rose to deliver his sentiments with more entire composure. Nor must I omit to mention, that the manner of her

Majesty was natural and easy in the highest degree: the utter absence of art or affectation must have struck every one present.

The speech being ended, Victoria descended from the throne, and with slow and graceful steps retired from the House to her robing-room, a few yards distant; nodding, as she did on her entrance, to most of the Peersmen whom she passed.

In person her Majesty is considerably below the average height. Her figure is good; rather inclined, as far as one could judge from seeing her in her robes of state, to the slender form. Every one who has seen her must have been struck with her singularly fine bust. Her complexion is clear, and has all the indications of excellent health about it. Her features are small, and partake a good deal of the Grecian cast. Her face, without being strikingly handsome, is remarkably pleasant, and is indicative of a mild and amiable disposition. She has an intelligent expression of countenance; and on all the occasions—three in number—on which I have seen her, has looked quite cheerful and happy.

In connexion with the opening of the Victoria Parliament, it is worthy of mention that the address to the Queen was moved by the Duke of Sussex. It was a highly interesting sight to witness his Royal Highness on this occasion. Not only did the circumstance of his being a veteran in the cause of reform, and its zealous and steady friend in the worst of times, necessarily give rise to a variety of reflections of the most hallowed kind, in the minds of all present favourable to the cause of human improvement; but there was something so ex-

ceedingly venerable in his personal appearance, as could not fail to impart an unusual interest to everything which proceeded from his lips. There stood his tall and exceedingly stout person, immediately adjoining the throne, not bowed down or decrepit by the load of years which pressed upon him, yet evidently feeble in a physical sense through the combined effects of advanced age and recent illness. His countenance wore a remarkably cheerful expression; it glowed with benevolence; and so far was a correct index to his disposition. The tones of his voice and the occasional energy of his manner, clearly showed that it was not merely from courtesy towards Ministers that he had undertaken the task of moving the address; but that it was to him a labour of love. He spoke with much distinctness, and with great seeming ease in so far as regarded the intellectual part of the exercise. He was distinctly heard in all parts of the House. His speech occupied from twenty to thirty minutes in the delivery, and was listened to with the deepest attention by all present—strangers as well as Peers. Considered as a mental effort, it would have been regarded as worthy of all praise had it proceeded from any noble lord in the prime of life, and was of an order of excellence which but few of their lordships could have equalled. Considered as the speech of one in his sixty-fourth year, and who has of late been a severe physical sufferer, it must have been looked on as a great intellectual achievement.

CHAPTER II.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Reappearance of Lord Brougham in the House—Lord Holland—Regular attendance of the Duke of Wellington—Decorum of their Lordships' proceedings as compared with those of the House of Commons—The Clerks of the House, and the Petitions presented—Immense size of a Petition—The proceedings in the Lords less lively than those in the Commons—Remarks on Lord Melbourne.

IN a miscellaneous chapter on the House of Lords, let me first of all congratulate the country on the reappearance of Lord Brougham among that body. Whatever may be the political views of individuals, all, I am sure, will rejoice to see him once more restored to the seat which he was wont to occupy in his capacity of legislator. The nation must have felt and regretted his absence from the House of Lords in the session of 1836, when reading the reports of the debates of that period; but those only who were accustomed to be nightly in the House, could form any idea of the dulness of the proceedings, in consequence of his Lordship's absence. It was, indeed, a sad change to those who had heard night after night for years before, the tones of his varied voice, and had witnessed the endless entertaining episodes and lively sallies to which his hot and hasty temperament was ever and anon giving rise,—to be doomed

to witness a whole session pass away, without his ever crossing the threshold of the place. Not much better was the session of 1837; for though then present physically, he may be said to have been mentally absent, having taken no part in the proceedings. During these two sessions the genius of dulness held undisturbed sway in the upper branch of the legislature; and the countenances of their Lordships were in the strictest keeping with the dulness of their proceedings. Perhaps a more demure-looking assemblage of human beings, taking their numbers into account, was never before to be seen. How altered the case this session! Not only has Lord Brougham been in his place night after night, since its commencement, with scarcely a single intermission, but very few nights have passed without his making a speech. And such speeches too! such speeches, I mean in regard to the talent the noble Lord displays, and the animation and energy of his manner. Henry's "himself again." Lord Brougham is at this moment all that he ever was. In some of his efforts, indeed, I should say that he has this session surpassed himself. No one, I am sure, who had the good fortune to hear his first speech on the Canadian question, will ever forget it. It occupied three hours in the delivery, and was perhaps one of the most masterly and brilliant efforts ever made within the walls of either House of Parliament. The ridicule he heaped on the devoted heads of Ministers, was, in a moral sense, absolutely annihilating. The sarcasms he levelled at Lord Glenelg, when criticising the noble Lord's despatches to the Governor of Canada, were literally withering. I use

no exaggeration when I say, that the friends of Ministers, and especially of Lord Glenelg, must have commiserated them from the bottom of their hearts—must have felt for them precisely in the same way as if the punishment which Lord Brougham was inflicting on them had been of a bodily or physical nature. The affair altogether strongly reminded me of a cross-tempered remorseless pedagogue, unsparingly applying the birch—regardless alike of their piteous looks and whining cries—to the persons of some half dozen of his urchins, who had had the misfortune either to merit punishment, or to incur his displeasure when in one of his more savage moods. What added to the effect of Lord Brougham's castigation of Ministers in this case was, that every one present saw clearly that Ministers themselves felt it in all its rigorous severity. If anything could have given additional effect to the heaviness of every successive blow, it would have been the appearance and manner of his Lordship. It did not seem to require an effort. His heart was evidently in the work: there were no indications of a reluctant application of the rod; as in the case of a father who does violence to his parental feelings when he chastises his child, and is only induced to do so from a conviction of its necessity, with a view to the correction of errors. With Lord Brougham the thing was manifestly a labour of love. You saw in the leer of his eye, in the general expression of his features, in the exulting tones of his voice, that to behold Ministers writhing around him, was to him a positive luxury, and one of the highest order. The friends of Ministers, as before observed, must have felt for them the more

deeply, because every one knew that they could not retaliate on their noble tormentor. The effects of his ponderous blows were clearly of too stunning a nature to admit of any hope of that. And the event proved that such was the right view of the case.

Lord Melbourne rose to reply when Lord Brougham sat down; but signal was the failure of the noble Premier's attempt. I have often seen him in the course of his speech, when a little excited by what had fallen from some opponent, hesitate and stammer and become confused; but in this case he had great difficulty in making a beginning at all. He seemed, for some time after he rose, as if he had been suffering under a degree of excitement which painfully and to a serious extent affected his organs of respiration. He breathed so rapidly, and laboured under so heavy a load of temporary excitement, that a full quarter of a minute elapsed before he could utter a distinct sentence. Nearly that time elapsed, indeed, before he could deliver himself of two connected words. And even when, as he proceeded, he recovered in some degree his self-possession or usual calmness, he did not make an effort to reply formally to Lord Brougham's tremendous attack, but contented himself with a short speech of the most general kind. The Marquis of Lansdowne was also fain to deal exclusively in generalities. Last of all came Lord Glenelg. Not less was his prudence than that of his two noble colleagues, as regarded a direct effort at reply to his merciless assailant; but it must be confessed that he was more happy than either of them, inasmuch as he met the ridicule of Lord Brougham with the same

weapon, and with some success. It is right, however, to mention that Lord Brougham had by this time quitted the house. How keenly Lord Glenelg smarted under the scorpion tongue of Lord Brougham, may be inferred from the circumstance of his having used an expression, which I believe he was never known to use before in either House of Parliament, and which, being a religious man, he would not, I am sure, use at any time or in any place, except when under the influence of strongly excited feelings. The expression to which I refer was—"For God's sake let the noble and learned Lord spare us his pain and his pity."* Lord Glenelg must be aware that this expression approaches, if indeed it do not constitute, a transgression of the commandment which forbids the taking the name of the Deity in vain; and I am sure, he must afterwards have regretted that he made use of it. Then there were Lord Brougham's various speeches on the slavery question. They were perfectly astounding displays of intellect and eloquence. He seemed as if he had been literally inspired: no speeches which I have ever heard, either in the House of Lords or elsewhere, could admit of a moment's comparison with them.

Lord Brougham now dresses rather smartly. Until the commencement of the present session, he was seldom to be seen since his return from his Scottish tour in 1834, without his tartan trousers and waistcoat. He

* This referred to the circumstance of Lord Brougham's having in the course of his speech said that he felt pain and pity at the situation of Ministers, in relation to their conduct on the Canada question.

is said to have bought as much cloth when in Inverness as would make a dozen pairs of the first, and a dozen of the last. Now he has put them aside, at least for a time, and appears in cloth of a more usual kind. At present he is partial to having his waistcoats made in such a way as to button close up to his chin. On his breast is displayed a very handsome gold chain. This chain, however, does not as is usual in such cases answer the purposes of a watch-guard; for it has no connexion with his watch. His watch-pocket is in the old-fashioned part of his wardrobe, not in his waistcoat; and its locality is indicated by a ribbon about three inches in length, which suspends a trio of the most massive watch-seals which ever regaled the eyes of those who are partial to such articles of jewellery. His lordship has a most decided antipathy to showing the collar of his shirt; and not less great is his aversion to fashionable stocks, or anything which would give him what is called a stiff-neck. His neckerchief is of black silk, and is always put on loosely and carelessly.

Great as is the dread with which the Tory Peers regard Lord Brougham, I am convinced they would rather run the risk of an occasional onslaught from him, than see him again out of the house. Before his absence in the session of 1836, I believe they felt differently. He had so assailed them in the previous sessions, since his transplantation from the Commons to their house, that I believe their unanimous wish was that he were again out of it; but having encountered the dulness of 1836 in consequence of his absence, I am persuaded they are now rejoiced at his presence, even though the price of

the entertainment he affords them, be often a regular onset at themselves. I am confirmed in this hypothesis by the reception he met with on his reappearance among them at the beginning of last session. It is true that the good-breeding which characterizes the aristocracy would have insured him at least the appearance of a welcome from them; but I am satisfied from what I saw, that the gratifying way in which they greeted his restoration to the house, was not in appearance merely, but perfectly sincere. If, then, they were pleased at his return among them in 1837, they must be doubly so now; for he is now at variance with the Whigs, and lashes them with the unsparing rigour with which he used to flagellate the Tories only. Need I say that it is strictly in accordance with human nature, that the conservative Peers should rejoice in seeing a man who can deal his blows about him so skilfully and with such effect as Lord Brougham,—let loose among their opponents. If there are persons who, in the excess of their charity, would suppose the Tories incapable of being influenced by such unworthy considerations, all I shall say is, I wish such persons had been in the House of Lords any of those nights of the present session in which Lord Brougham discharged the vials of his indignation on the heads of Ministers. I will answer for it, that they would have been undeceived long before his Lordship had got half through his speech. They would have seen in the countenances of the Tory Peers—else Lavater was either a rank impostor or a great ignoramus—evidence of the most conclusive kind, as to the supreme gratification with which

they beheld his Lordship applying the lash to his quondam Whiggish friends. And they would have heard proofs, if there be not an inaccuracy in the expression, as well as seen them, of the treat which his Lordship's merciless flagellation of Ministers afforded the Tories. Their loud laughter—a laughter sometimes so excessive as to agitate the whole of the Tory benches at once—would have very soon set the point at rest. While wielding the cudgel with such extraordinary effect at Ministers' expense, on the memorable night already alluded to in detail, in which he assailed their Canadian despatches and Canadian policy, the Tory Peers evidently enjoyed the scene as a luxury of the most exquisite kind. They all laughed with a frequency and heartiness which are quite rare in that house. Indeed, Lord Brougham is almost the only man I ever saw create a cordial laugh in that locality.

Lord Brougham continues to sit in the part of the House which he chose for himself after his secession from the woolsack. His choice of the particular seat he fixed on then, was quite intelligible at the time. Being at that period on the most friendly terms with Ministers, it was natural that he should have taken up his position in the house immediately on the right hand of Lord Melbourne. That he should have continued there, has excited some surprise, now that he has avowedly broken off all connexion with Ministers. It was expected that dissatisfied as he now is with both parties in the House, he would have taken his seat beside the Duke of Richmond, and one or two other Peers who profess to be neutral, on the cross-benches. The noble

Lord, however, has done no such thing. He still occupies his usual seat, which is separated from that of Lord Melbourne only by a passage of about three feet in width. It was an amusing scene to witness both the noble lords so close to each other, on the night on which they had the celebrated conflict together, as to which was the greatest proficient in glosing, fawning, and playing the spaniel at court. If I am not much mistaken, the Premier would, to use an Irish expression, give a trifle to see Lord Brougham remove his locality to some other part of the house.

In my first series of "Random Recollections of the Lords," I alluded to the painful illness under which Lord Holland had laboured for some years previously, and expressed an apprehension, that, owing to his then growing infirmities and advanced age, he would not often again address their Lordships. That apprehension, I am happy to say, has not been realized. Lord Holland has within the last two years made a number of very able and effective speeches. Some of them were worthy of his best days; and what is no less wonderful is, that notwithstanding the physical ailments to which I have alluded, and his being now in his sixty-fifth year, he has delivered speeches within the last two sessions, with a boldness of tone, a vehemence of gesture, and a general earnestness and animation of manner, unsurpassed by any other noble speaker in the House. When I noticed Lord Holland in my former work, it was not without the greatest difficulty that he could stand at all, even with the aid of his crutches; now he can stand without them. It is rarely that rheu-

matisms, when they have once attacked a person of Lord Holland's age, ever afterwards quit their victim. This they have done in a great measure in his case. It is doubtful, however, whether he will enjoy any lengthened exemption from a renewal of the attack in its more violent form. Every one who knows his lordship, must anxiously wish he may; but unhappily the wishes of friends are of no avail in such matters. It is a positive luxury to witness the perpetual glow of good-humour and benevolence which irradiates Lord Holland's countenance. A more pleasing face than his lordship's is not to be seen within the walls of the Upper House.

I have referred to Lord Brougham's remarkably regular attendance in the house during the present session. Next to him in this respect, I would mention the name of the Duke of Wellington. In my first series of "Random Recollections of the House of Lords," I stated that the Duke of Cumberland, now the King of Hanover, was the most regular in his attendance in the house of any noble lord; and had he been still in this country, in the capacity simply of a Peer of the realm, I have no doubt that he would have continued to retain the distinction. His mantle has fallen, as regards regularity of attendance, on the Duke of Wellington. He is almost invariably to be seen among the first who make their appearance on the opening of the doors, and he is usually among the last to quit the house. He is usually wrapped up, close to the mouth, in a narrow brown cloak which does not reach the length of his knees. He is a man of whom the Tory party may well be proud. He is in every respect a credit to that party. Most

assiduously and heartily does he labour in their service; not, indeed, with the view of promoting party purposes; but because he deems Toryism to be heaven-born, and consequently most conducive to the interests of the empire. I have no idea that any other consideration than that of a persuasion that he is acting for the welfare of the country would ever operate on his mind. Mistaken as I regard him to be in many points of essential importance, I cannot resist the conviction that he is actuated by the purest motives. I cannot conceive that any thing but genuine, even if misguided patriotism, could induce such active exertions in a man who has attained the advanced age of seventy; who has so distinguished a reputation; and who is, moreover, so advantageously circumstanced in reference to pecuniary matters, as the Duke. It is no less gratifying than surprising to see a man who has reached such an age, and undergone so much anxiety of mind, and great physical fatigue, looking so well and in such excellent spirits. Nothing but an extraordinary energy of mind, and a constitution of the most robust kind, could have enabled the Duke to survive the circumstances in which he has been placed, and the hardships he has undergone. There he sits, night after night, with his arms usually folded on his breast, and his right leg thrown over the left, listening most attentively to every thing which is passing in the house, and looking as fresh and vigorous as if he were still in the prime of life. His gray hair, approaching to whiteness, is the principal if not the only index to the accumulation of years which has gathered on his head, which his personal aspect affords. If one might

judge from present appearances—though in such matters we all know how deceptive appearances often are—the conclusion would be, that the Duke is destined to live for many years to come.

Regarding the regularity or irregularity of attendance on the part of other Peers on either side of the house, I do not know that I need make any remarks in addition to those made in my First Series of “Random Recollections” of the Upper House. Their Lordships have sat more frequently during the present session than they have done since the session in which the Reform Bill was before them; but I think that, with very few exceptions, there have been a less number of members present than in any former session since the period alluded to. It is no uncommon thing to see the business of the evening transacted by some fifteen or twenty Peers; often, indeed, there are not present more than twelve or fourteen. To the credit of those who do attend, let me mention, that they do not meet for mere amusement, but evidently with a desire to transact business. An amusing instance of this was furnished towards the end of January. An intimation having one evening been conveyed by Ministers in the House of Commons, to Lord Melbourne, that the bill for suspending the constitution in Canada was on the eve of being read a third time and passed in the Lower House, and that it would be desirable if it could be brought up to the Lords and be read by them a first time that night, Lord Melbourne took care to let the intelligence transpire as soon as he received it; and the Tories being as anxious for the passing of the measure as Ministers them-

selves, it was agreed they should remain for some time, though they had got through their business, to admit of its introduction and first reading. It was expected at the time that the gentleman, whose name I forget, who was speaking on it when the message was sent to Lord Melbourne, would conclude the short discussion to which the motion for its third reading had given rise, and that there was every probability their Lordships would not have to wait more than half an hour at the furthest. In about fifteen minutes afterwards another message was sent up from the Commons, to the effect that the gentleman who had been speaking was down, but that Mr. Borthwick was up! The intelligence spread through the house instantaneously, and equally instantaneously did their Lordships start to their feet, without any thing like understood concert among them, each ejaculating to himself, and many of them making the remark to each other,—“Oh, if *he* has begun a speech there’s no saying when he will end.”—“I move that this House do adjourn,” said the Lord Chancellor, and in a few seconds not a Peer was to be seen. The fact is, that Mr. Peter Borthwick had the reputation, if so it may be called, of being one of the most long-winded and prolix speakers in the Commons; never sitting down so long as any one would hear him. Their Lordships consequently took the hint with an edifying alacrity. It is worthy of mention, that Mr. Borthwick, on this particular occasion, not only instantly adjourned the Lords, but almost emptied the House of Commons of its members. He did not, as usual, sit down until he was literally *put* down by the few members that remained.

In my former work on the House of Lords, I had occasion to speak of the singular decorum, as compared with the other House, with which their Lordships conduct all their proceedings. I have often wished that those who are prejudiced against hereditary legislators, were present two or three evenings to witness their conduct during the debates. They might after all—whether justly or not is not for me to say, as I do not wish to appear in these pages in the character of a politician,—they might after all cling to the conviction that hereditary legislators are not the wisest legislators; but of this I am certain, that they would be forward to admit that, in point of manners there is no comparison between them and the assemblage in the other House. It must have been a member of the House of Commons who characterized that body as an “assembly of the first gentlemen in Europe.” So far from being the first in Europe in regard to gentlemanly conduct, there is an assembly within a few yards of them, who in this respect throw them completely into the shade. The most unpopular man among them is always treated with the greatest respect; at least in outward appearance. No Peer was ever known to give a forced cough, or to offer any sort of interruption, with the view of putting down an unpopular speaker, or marking his disapprobation of an obnoxious sentiment. Even the late Lord King, when assailing with the utmost freedom of remark the bench of Bishops,—who are everything short of being absolutely sacred in the eyes of noble Lords—even he was always heard with the utmost courtesy. On the late occasion of Mr. Roebuck’s addressing their Lord-

ships in favour of the claims of the Canadians, a striking instance of the respectful way in which the Peers conduct themselves, was afforded. Though Mr. Roebuck's previous exhibition of a similar kind in the Commons, was so much marked by the bitterness of his manner and the violence of his matter, as to be calculated to create a prejudice against him, and though many parts of the speech he made to them must have grated in their ears, yet they not only heard him throughout his three hours' address with the most respectful attention, but they even quitted their usual seats, and crowded together close to the bar, to be as near as possible to him. How different was it in the comparatively democratic Commons! Not a "people's representatives," so far as I saw, moved an inch towards the bar for the purpose of being nearer the Canadian advocate.

To a stranger, it is not the least interesting part of the proceedings in the Upper House, to witness the facility and matter-of-course sort of way, in which the clerks of the house dispose of the petitions, when they are numerous, which are presented by the Peers. One of these clerks reads the heading of every petition after it has been presented, and then tosses it over the table to his colleague in office, in the most careless possible manner; while the latter takes it up in a crumpled state in his hand, and stows it away in a bag which is attached to the table for the reception of petitions. This bag, when such general interest attaches to any particular subject as to call forth petitions from all parts of the kingdom, is sometimes so full, and the pieces of parchment are packed so closely together, that you would

fancy the bag would literally burst. One cannot help contrasting the "rude" way in which the innocent petitions are thus treated by the clerks, with the great care which has been expended on their penmanship by the parties who wrote them. On some occasions, I may state, the petitions have been so bulky as to be equally beyond the power of a Peer to present them in the usual form, and the capacity of the bag in question to receive them. There were several cases of this kind in the course of the discussions on the Reform Bill; but the most recent instance, and probably the most remarkable one that ever occurred, was that of the petition presented last session, in favour of the Irish Church, by the Protestants of Ireland. The petition, it may be remembered, was agreed to at a great meeting held in the leading Protestant county in that country, and had affixed to it, if I recollect rightly, the immense number of 160,000 signatures. I shall never forget the presentation of that petition. The Peer whose duty it was to lay it before their Lordships, could not, of course, unless he had been a second Sampson, hold it in his hand. I need hardly, therefore, say that he was obliged on the occasion, to dispense with the phrase almost universally used on the presentation of petitions, namely, "the petition which I hold in my hand." So far from holding it in his hand, he could not have supported it for an instant on his shoulders: it would have broken his back. I doubt if any two of the most able-bodied Peers in the house could have raised it to the table. I am pretty sure they could not without the assistance of some mechanical power. It lay on the floor, and no-

thing could be more ludicrous than to see the noble Lord who presented it calling attention to it, while lying there. It was in the circular form, and every fold was so closely pressed together as to give it the appearance of a solid mass of vellum. Some idea of the weight—I mean the avoirdupois and not the moral weight—of this Protestant document, may be formed, when I mention that the diameter, as nearly as I could judge from a glance of the eye a few yards distant from it, was about three feet, while the breadth was nearly two feet. It was rolled into the house, and out of the house, in exactly the same way as a coachmaker rolls the detached wheel of a carriage from one part of his premises to another.

The House of Lords, as compared with the House of Commons, has a dull aspect at any time. Nothing can exceed the dulness of its proceedings at particular periods. You would fancy, on the occasions to which I allude, that it was one of the laws of the house that their Lordships should look as grave as practicable, and that they should speak with the least possible amount of animation or gesture, consistently with their not being mistaken for so many automata. If such be the dulness which generally characterizes their Lordships' proceedings, let the reader fancy what it must be on those occasions, when there is an entire pause for some little time in these proceedings. Such occasions do occur several times in the course of the session. They chiefly arise from their waiting, when they chance to have no other business before them, to receive the concurrence of the Commons to any amendments which

their Lordships have made on any particular measure sent up to them, and when they expect that concurrence as a matter of course. The longest pause of this kind which I ever recollect to have witnessed, occurred on the 19th of February last. The Lords had made some important amendments on the Joint Stock Co-partners Banking Bill, and not doubting that those amendments would be concurred in at once, and the passing of the measure being most urgent,—their Lordships sent down their Masters in Chancery with the bill, as amended, to the Commons, and resolved to wait until it should be returned to them with the sanction of the Lower House; so that it might be at once in a state to receive the royal assent. It happened, however, that a discussion was going on in the latter place at the time, and it being expected to terminate every minute, their Lordships' servants thought it would be more respectful to the representatives of the people to wait until it was over, than to interrupt the proceedings. Upwards of an hour, however, elapsed before the discussion in the Commons finished, and during all that time their Lordships sat without a single syllable being uttered. Silence reigned in undisputed sovereignty in the place, except when a noble lord's feet were heard treading on the floor as he quitted the house. When the measure was sent down to the Commons, there were about fourteen or fifteen noble lords present, but before it was returned, all of them with the exception of four, one after another, had stolen out of the house. The four that endured the martyrdom of remaining were the Lord Chancellor, as a matter of course; some Tory peer whose name I could

not ascertain; and Lord Melbourne and the Marquis of Lansdowne. The scene was altogether one which admits not of description. On the woolsack sat the Lord Chancellor; on his left reclined a solitary peer, the undisturbed possessor of the Tory benches, or, in other words, constituting in his own individual person the Opposition, for the time being, to her Majesty's government; while, on the right of the Lord Chancellor, and directly opposite the solitary Conservative peer, sat the Premier and the President of the Council. It has never been my lot to witness so characteristic an illustration of the silent system. It would have rejoiced the heart of Sir Peter Laurie, and the other advocates of that system, to have been present. Each peer was as much left to indulge in his own reflections, as if he had been in the middle of the "wide waste" referred to by the poet Thomson, or the "lone inhabitant" of the desert isle mentioned by Cowper. The Lord Chancellor fixed his eye on the floor; Lord Melbourne rested his head in his hand, which last, again, reposed on the back part of his seat; while the Marquis of Lansdowne, turning his back to his noble colleague, lowered his chin very snugly into his breast. As for the Tory peer, I can say nothing of him, farther than that he was there; his back being to the gallery. I may, however, mention that I am strongly impressed with the notion, that he very wisely took advantage of so favourable an opportunity for indulging in a comfortable nap.

In a chapter of *Miscellaneous Observations* on the Upper House, I may perhaps without impropriety, subjoin a few remarks respecting Lord Melbourne, in ad-

dition to those I made in my sketch of that nobleman in the First Series of the work. Since the appearance of that work two years have elapsed, and the noble Premier has, by consequence, added two years more to his age; but unlike most other men, who become more and more sedate in appearance the older they grow—the more he advances in years the greater seems to be his flow of spirits, and the lighter do the cares of office appear to sit on his shoulders. I have had an opportunity of observing the demeanour of various Prime Ministers; but I never saw one who seemed to be so little affected with the responsibilities of that high office, as the noble viscount who now presides over the councils of her Majesty. I have always observed, too, or fancied I observed, that the longer others were in office, the more sensibly did they appear to feel the onerous nature of their situation. Far it be from me to say that this is not the case with Lord Melbourne; but if it be, Lavater must have been the greatest impostor or empiric—call him whichever you please—which modern times have produced. Lord Melbourne looks twenty per cent. more cheerful and vivacious than he did in the session of 1835. He has, as already remarked, an abundant flow of spirits; and has altogether the appearance of one whose mind is at perfect ease. Even during the debates on the Canadian bill, which, considering all the circumstances of the case, was one of the most important measures which has been before the legislature for some years past, the noble viscount looked among the happiest men in the house. His speeches, too, only served to establish my hypothesis. They

were full of observations of a humorous kind, and nothing seemed to afford him greater pleasure than when his witticisms, especially those directed against Lord Brougham, told with effect. And if further evidence were wanting to put my theory beyond all doubt, that evidence would be found in his lordship's dress and manner. He is generally much more smartly attired than he used to be, and is seldom to be seen without his cane, which he sports with a grace which would do no discredit to any of the West-end sprigs of fashion.

CHAPTER III.

SCENES IN THE HOUSE.

Scene between Lords Melbourne and Lyndhurst—Scene between Lords Melbourne and Brougham—Scene between the Bishops of Exeter and London.

IN my First Series, I contrasted at some length the difference between the Upper and Lower Houses, with regard to the decorum which characterize their respective proceedings. It is not necessary I should repeat any of those observations here. A *scene*, properly so called, in the House of Lords, is an event which very rarely occurs; and when it does happen, it is in almost every instance an affair between two or three of their Lordships; and not one to which any considerable number of them are parties. I shall endeavour to sketch three of the best scenes which have lately taken place on the floor of the Upper House. Decidedly the best scene of the present session occurred on the evening of

the 26th of February. It had its origin in the circumstance of Lord Lyndhurst having brought the subject of certain alleged abuses, in the administration of matters in the Milbank Penitentiary, before their Lordships, without having first apprised her Majesty's ministers of his intention of doing so. When Lord Lyndhurst, who spoke in the calmest and most honeyed tone, as he usually does, sat down.

Lord Melbourne rose, and after two or three commonplace observations, with much warmth and great emphasis, characterized the statement of Lord Lyndhurst as "calm and artful."

Lord Lyndhurst, with an expression of countenance something between a sneer and a smile, and in the blandest possible manner, said, he hoped his statement was "calm," but he could assure their Lordships it was not "artful." Nothing could exceed the irony which was contained in Lord Lyndhurst's looks and tones. It was evident that Lord Melbourne severely smarted under it; but the unkindest and keenest cut was yet to come. "That the noble viscount and the other members of the government should be ignorant," said Lord Lyndhurst, "of the facts contained in the statement I have made, only proves that they are as ignorant of their domestic duties as they are incapable of managing the colonial government and foreign relations of the country."

It was not to be expected that a man of Lord Melbourne's hot and hasty temperament could sit silent under these biting words. The noble lord, however, was prevented from instant retaliation on Lord Lynd-

hurst, by the circumstance of Lord Brougham having started to his feet the moment Lord Lyndhurst resumed his seat. When Lord Brougham sat down, Lord Melbourne immediately rose, evidently labouring under the greatest excitement, and renewed his complaint of the want of courtesy on the part of Lord Lyndhurst, in not giving ministers previous notice of his intention to bring the matter before their Lordships. At every succeeding sentence he delivered, he grew more and more warm, till at length he seemed, as by his own after-admission was the fact, to have worked himself up into such a pitch of irritation as to be altogether unconscious of what he was saying. "I wish," he exclaimed, drawing himself back, and then plunging forward towards the table, which he struck with immense force with his clenched fist, "I wish that the noble Duke (the Duke of Wellington) had been here!" Again hastily going a few paces backwards towards his seat, he as hastily advanced to the table, and repeating the "heavy blow" on it, at the same time looking Lord Lyndhurst in the face, he said, with a vehemence of tone which made the house resound again, and almost choked his utterance—"The noble duke would have sooner cut off his right hand than have taken such a course as that taken by the noble and learned lord." Now the most death-like stillness reigned in the house. Not a whisper was exchanged between any two noble lords: every eye was fixed on the Premier, and every ear was opened to hear what yet remained. Lord Lyndhurst had hitherto looked at his opponent with unaltered features. Lord Melbourne a third time drew himself away some feet from the table,

and again advanced with, if possible, an increased precipitation and excitement, striking the table as before, and exclaiming, with a loudness of tone and a warmth of manner, which he was perhaps never known on any previous occasion to exhibit,—“The noble duke is a *gentleman*—the noble duke is a man of *honour*.” Lord Lyndhurst’s countenance was now observed to change colour, and to assume a scowling aspect, denoting the construction which he put upon the two sentences of the noble Premier. The peers on both sides of the house exchanged looks, and the noble lords on the Tory side were seen to whisper something to each other. The language of those looks was plain; the import of the whisperings was evident. Every one present felt that Lord Melbourne had, by implication, applied epithets to Lord Lyndhurst, which the latter noble lord could not suffer to pass unnoticed. And yet, so completely did the manner of Lord Melbourne, coupled with the unusual language he employed, take the house by surprise, that not one single cry of “Order” was heard to proceed from any one present. Lord Melbourne then proceeded to make some observations of a more general nature, but still labouring under a degree of excitement which repeatedly impeded his utterance, and made him appear as if subject to some physical defect in the organs of speech. What he said, however, was but little attended to; for it was clear that all present had their minds fixed on the inevitable certainty of a hostile meeting next day between the two noble lords, unless the Premier should retract the offensive expressions.

Lord Melbourne having resumed his seat, Lord

Lyndhurst rose, and in a firm tone, but yet with the greatest coolness, said,—“The noble viscount says he wishes the noble duke had been here, because the noble duke is a gentleman and a man of honour. That observation, which is true of the noble duke, was applied by the noble viscount in such a manner as to bear a different construction as applied to others. I wish to know in what sense the noble viscount applies those observations. I beg an explanation.”

It is impossible to imagine the stillness which now prevailed in the house. Every countenance in it looked as grave as if the individual doom of every noble Lord had depended on the next sentence which Lord Melbourne should utter.

Lord Melbourne, in a subdued tone, said,—“When I said that the noble duke was a gentleman and a man of honour, I did not say that anybody else was not a gentleman and a man of honour.”

Lord Lyndhurst.—“The words are capable of a particular construction. Again I ask the noble viscount what he meant by them?”

Lord Melbourne not having risen on the moment to answer the question, Lord Lyndhurst quitted his seat, and was in the act of hastily quitting the house, when

Lord Brougham rose, and entreated him to remain. Lord Lyndhurst complied with the request of Lord Brougham, and again sat down. It is impossible to give any idea of the scene which the house exhibited all this time; and yet no one, with the exception of Lord Brougham, ventured to interfere between the two noble Lords. Lord Brougham then spoke for some minutes,

identifying himself with Lord Lyndhurst, and plainly intimating to Lord Melbourne that he, Lord Brougham, was equally guilty, if guilt it was to be called, in intention; for that if he had not been anticipated by Lord Lyndhurst, he would assuredly have brought the subject before their Lordships that same evening.

Lord Brougham having concluded, Lord Lyndhurst again rose, and with a firmness of manner which told that he would take no further denial, said—"I must insist on knowing from the noble viscount whether he meant to convey any imputation on my character—whether he meant to say that I was not a man of honour."

Lord Melbourne then said—"I do not recollect what I said: I do not know what were the words I used in the excitement of the moment. But I distinctly state, that if I said anything in reference to the noble and learned Lord—anything to the effect that he had acted unlike a man of honour, or in any way unbecoming a gentleman, I most fully retract those words."

Lord Lyndhurst—"I am perfectly satisfied."

And here, to use the newspaper phraseology on such occasions, the matter dropped.

Of the individual collisions which sometimes take place among their Lordships, the memorable squabble on the 12th of December, between Lords Melbourne and Brougham, carries off the palm from any which have occurred for some time past. The accusations and recriminations which the two noble Lords interchanged with each other, were specimens of as pure personality as ever occurred in that house. The more

reading of the report of what passed between them, conveys no adequate idea of the scene itself. To form any conception of the gusto with which they mutually preferred their charges, one must have been present on the occasion. The collision occurred in the course of some remarks which Lord Brougham was addressing to the House, on the subject of the Duchess of Kent's Annuity Bill; and the circumstances which gave rise to it afforded a forcible illustration of the well-known adage—"A little spark often kindleth a great flame." The noble Lord, speaking of the Duchess of Kent, made use of the expression, "Queen-mother;" on which Lord Melbourne, who was sitting next to Lord Brougham, resting his arm on the back of the bench, and again resting his head on his hand, observed with some abruptness—"no, no; not 'Queen-mother,' but the mother of the Queen." Lord Brougham, who is at all times exceedingly impatient of contradiction or correction, immediately exclaimed, in his hot and hasty manner, and with considerable vehemence of tone—"Oh! I know the distinction between the two phrases as well as my noble friend does; but he is a much more expert courtier than I am!"

The peculiarly sarcastic manner in which the latter sentence was delivered, accompanied as it was by the expressive glance which Lord Brougham directed towards Lord Melbourne, caused a general laugh among the Tory Peers. It was not only evident that they enjoyed with special zest the pointed allusion to the frequency with which Lord Melbourne at that time dined with the Queen, but that they expected something more

of the same kind from the noble Lord, now that he had pointed in that particular direction. Nor were they disappointed.

"I am," continued he, "rude and uncultivated in speech. The tongue of my noble friend has been recently so well hung and attuned to courtly airs, that I could not attempt to enter into competition with him on such subjects as these."

A most hearty and universal burst of laughter from the opposition benches greeted the latter observation, while the countenances of the Tory Peers showed the infinite gratification with which they witnessed the new mode of warfare adopted by Lord Brougham in the case of her Majesty's ministers.

His Lordship resumed—"The notions of my noble friend are more strictly poised and governed on these points than mine are."

Another peal of laughter from the Tory peers followed, which was made the more striking from the contrast which the countenances and mood of mind of the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Glenelg, and the other noble lords on the ministerial benches, exhibited. Lord Brougham himself, instead of being infected with the smiling propensities of the Tory peers, only looked the more grave, and spoke with a ludicrous solemnity of tone which gave additional pungency to his galling observations.

Lord Melbourne rose the moment Lord Brougham sat down, evidently stung by the bitter sneers and irony of the latter. "My Lords" he said, after some observations of a general nature—"my lords, I took the

liberty to suggest that there was a difference, not an immaterial one in the present case, between the expressions 'Queen mother,' and the 'mother of the Queen.' The noble and learned lord said that was a distinction only to be made in courts—a distinction only recognised where there is glosing and flattery—where tongues are better hung, as the noble and learned lord expressed it. (Laughter from the Tory benches.) I do not know what the noble and learned lord means when he says that my tongue is better hung: I cannot speak of the hanging of the tongue; and as to glosing and flattering, I must be allowed to say ——"

Here the noble Lord became exceedingly energetic in his manner; and spoke under the influence of such strong excitement as to cause him repeatedly to falter in his utterance.

"I must," he continued, "be allowed to say that I know no man in this country who can more glose and flatter, and bend the knee, than the noble and learned lord himself—not one; and therefore when he says he cannot compete with me in those arts, I beg leave to say, I feel myself totally unable to compete with him, when he finds an opportunity, or an occasion offers for exercising them."

The countenances of the noble lords on the ministerial benches suddenly became lighted up with a smile of rejoicing, at the spirited way in which Lord Melbourne retaliated on Lord Brougham; while it was easy to see that the Tory peers were cheered with the conviction, that the latter noble lord was not the man to be beaten at the game which had been playing; but that

he would treat them to a rejoinder which would afford them some rare sport. These convictions were soon confirmed.

"I positively and solemnly deny," said Lord Brougham, "and I call on the noble viscount to produce his proofs, that I ever in my life did, and more than that, that I ever in my nature was capable of doing, that which the noble viscount has chosen to-night, unprovoked, to fling out as a charge against me."

Lord Melbourne—"No, no; not 'unprovoked.' "

Lord Brougham—"Yes, unprovoked; I say utterly unprovoked. I spoke in as good-humoured a tone, with as perfectly inoffensive a meaning, as it was possible for man to speak or for man to feel, when the noble viscount observed, with a contemptuous sort of air, that I should not say 'Queen mother,' but 'mother of the Queen;' as much as to intimate, 'Oh! you know nothing of these things; you don't speak the language of courts.' I said, far be it from me to enter into competition with the noble viscount, whose tongue is now attuned and hung to courtly airs."

There was a sarcasm in the tone and manner of Lord Brougham when he uttered the latter sentence, which gave the words a withering effect of which no idea can be entertained by any one who was not present in the house on the occasion.

Lord Brougham continued—"The noble viscount answers that, by saying he cannot enter into competition with me in the hanging of the tongue. It was not the hanging of the tongue I spoke of—it was the attuning of the tongue—the new tune, with recent variations."

Here the noble Lord was interrupted by another burst of laughter from the Tory Peers.

"The new tune," he resumed, "with recent variations, to which the noble viscount's tolerably well-hung tongue had now attained."

Bursts of laughter again proceeded from the Tory benches; and no wonder, for the peculiarly comic tone and manner, to say nothing of the words, would, I am convinced, have extorted a laugh from even the half-stern, half-demure quondam Duke of Cumberland himself, had he been present.

Lord Brougham having thus retorted on Lord Melbourne, proceeded as follows to repel the imputation.—"That the noble viscount should take such an opportunity to level a charge at me, which he knows to be—which he must feel and know, when he comes calmly to reflect on it—is utterly and absolutely, and I may add, notoriously inapplicable to me—produced, I must own, in my mind, not of late unaccustomed to feelings of astonishment, some little degree of surprise. I repeat what I have already said;—first, that the imputation or insinuation that I ever, in the discharge of my duty, stooped to gloss, or to bow before or to flatter **any** human being, much more any inmate of a court, **is** utterly, absolutely, and I will say, notoriously **without** foundation. The next part of the insinuation is, if possible, equally groundless—that if I had an opportunity of having recourse to these arts, peradventure I should excel in them. I want no such opportunity. If I did, I have the opportunity. I disdain it. No access which I have had has ever—to the injury of others—to the

betrayal of duty—to my own shame—been so abused, not even for one instant; and opportunity to abuse it I have, if I were base enough so to avail myself of it.”

Nothing could exceed the earnest and impassioned manner in which the noble lord delivered this last passage. It was a mingled burst of bad temper and indignant eloquence, and was listened to in breathless silence by the House.

A personal squabble between any two of the bench of bishops, worthy of the name of “a scene,” is a circumstance which very rarely occurs in the house. It is a pity, for the sake of the Church as well as for themselves, that it ever should occur at all. The most animated quarrel I have ever witnessed between two right reverend prelates, took place on the 22nd of February, on the occasion of the Archbishop of Canterbury pronouncing a high eulogium on the late Bishop of Sodor and Man. His Grace having resumed his seat, the Bishop of Exeter rose and said, with much emphasis, that he lamented the constitution of the ecclesiastical commission, whose acts he must deplore, as fatal to the security and dignity of the Church.

The Bishop of London, who is one of the ecclesiastical commissioners, said, with great warmth and much tartness of manner, that the commissioners had no right to complain of the reverend prelate’s remarks on the constitution of the ecclesiastical commission; but they certainly had to complain of the *gross misrepresentations* which had been made on the subject.

The Bishop of Exeter again started up, and with considerable vehemence of manner, as well as in a tone of

indignant defiance of the Bishop of London, said—"I repel not the insinuations, but the charge which has been made by the right reverend prelate; for I have been guilty of no misrepresentation. In my opinion the Church never received such a blow as this ecclesiastical commission would prove."

The Bishop of London made some other observation which was not distinctly heard, when the Bishop of Exeter again started to his feet, and met it by some other remark, which, from the warmth and hastiness of his manner, I could not catch. The scene was of short duration, but it was a very extraordinary one for two spiritual lords to enact. No one would have before believed that either of the two prelates could have lost his temper to such an extent. I thought at the time, that had the late Lord King, whose dislike to bishops was as proverbial as it was inveterate, been alive and present, the scene would have been to him a luxury of the first magnitude.

CHAPTER IV.

CONSERVATIVE PEERS.

The Duke of Rutland—the Marquis of Bute—the Marquis of Camden—the Marquis of Westmeath—the Earl of Shaftesbury—the Earl of Stanhope.

THE DUKE OF RUTLAND is one of those who, though they never speak on general or party questions, very rarely allow particular subjects to be introduced without saying something on them. A more decided or con-

sistent Conservative than his Grace is not to be found, and yet no consideration will induce him to make a political speech. His portion is, and in that he is quite right, that such topics, when brought under the consideration of their Lordships, are sure to find an abundance of speakers, and that consequently any observations of his may be well spared. But let any matter bearing directly on the interests of agriculture be brought forward, and if in the house at the time, the chances are in the proportion of twenty to one that he will speak on it. On all agricultural topics the noble duke is very intelligent. With the leading questions affecting the landed interest or the farmers he is thoroughly conversant, and can at all times make his information available. As a mere speaker, apart from his matter, he does not rank high. His manner is against him. He wants fluency of utterance: he hesitates a good deal, and his language consequently appears worse when addressing their lordships than it really is. On some occasions you could not help impugning the evidence either of your ears or your eyes, when you compare his speeches as spoken with his speeches as read. His addresses, in other words, are much better in print than they are in the delivery.

Let me not be here misunderstood. In many cases, the improved speech in the newspapers owes much of its improvement to the touching and re-touching of the reporter's pen. This is not what I mean in the case of the Duke of Rutland. I am supposing that his addresses to their Lordships are taken down exactly as they are spoken, when I say that they appear much

better in the reading than they did in the delivery. His voice, though not strong, is sufficiently so to make him audible. It has nothing peculiar in its tones. His action is so gentle as to be hardly deserving of the name. He always speaks from the table, and puts himself, the moment he rises, into what may be termed a leaning-forward position. He is not a regular attendant in the house on ordinary occasions; but is rarely absent unless he has some urgent cause for his absence when an important debate is expected. In private life his Grace is regarded with the highest respect. He is one of the most hospitable of the English aristocracy, while, as a landlord, a better hearted or more considerate man never lived.

The noble duke is a tall man, sparely made. He has an angular nose, and his visage altogether has a good deal of sharpness about it. His complexion is not without colour, but cannot be said to be florid. His hair has something of an auburn hue. He is in his sixty-first year.

The Marquis of BUTE is a name which is quite familiar to the public ear and eye, and yet it is seldom to be seen in the reports of the proceedings of the house. I am not aware, indeed, that the noble marquis has taken part in any debate for many years past. Whenever his name appears at all in connexion with the proceedings of the house, it is simply as having presented some petition to their Lordships. On such occasions he pretty often takes occasion to support, as it is called, the prayer of the petition; and this he usually does with

considerable effect. His observations, however, in such cases seldom assume the shape of argument; they are chiefly of a statistical nature. He tells their Lordships the number of persons whose signatures are attached to the petition; assures them that the parties are respectable; and refers to the feeling on the subject of the petition in the town or district whence it emanates. In his statements, the noble marquis is very clear, and they are usually of a nature more calculated to weigh with their Lordships than a set speech of a purely argumentative character. His mind does not seem formed for abstract reasonings. Facts appear to him to be things which ought to exercise the greatest influence on men's minds. They assuredly operate more on his own than either eloquence or logic, or both combined. His manner is quiet and unpretending. He does not speak in loud tones, but makes himself sufficiently audible. His utterance is the happy medium between slow and fast. Of gesture he has hardly any; nor would action or animation be in place in the mere presentation of an ordinary petition.

In person the noble marquis is short and thickly set. His complexion is florid, and his hair light. His features have nothing remarkable in them. His face is round; and the expression of his countenance is placid and agreeable. He is in his forty-fifth year. Though he takes no prominent part publicly in politics, he is known to be a zealous Conservative, and to look with very serious apprehensions to the ultimate consequences of a prolonged ascendancy of liberal principles.

The Marquis of CAMDEN is a nobleman regarding whose politics a mistaken notion prevails to a very considerable extent. The circumstance of his returning every year into the Treasury the splendid salary to which he is entitled as Teller of the Exchequer, has led many persons to imagine that he is a self-denying Liberal,—just as if it were incompatible with the very nature of a Tory to do a generous action on public grounds. When I mention that a stauncher Tory is not to be found than the noble marquis, the fact will teach the Liberals that real practical “liberality” is not all on their side, but that there are at least some of their opponents who can furnish an unequivocal proof that they possess that attribute. From first to last, the amount of public money which the noble marquis has thus returned, of his own free will and consent, into the national treasury, is nearly 300,000*l*. This circumstance has brought his name with a much greater prominence before the public, than anything he has said or done in the House of Lords. Indeed he there very rarely speaks. Beyond accompanying the presentation of a petition with a few observations, I do not remember having heard him utter a word, for some years past, on general topics. There is one subject, however, on which he is under a sort of conventional necessity of saying something, when that subject is brought under the consideration of the House. I allude to the subject of the Universities of England. The noble marquis, being Chancellor of the University of Oxford, feels bound, in virtue of his office, to defend that University from the attacks which Lord Radnor, or any other noble Lord on his side of

the House, may think proper to make upon it. Even on such occasions, however, the noble marquis always says as little as possible. He has a decided dislike to speeches of any length in others, and shows by his conduct that he is equally averse to them in his own case. Here the Marquis of Camden's practice is in consistency with his theory. In this respect he is unlike many of his brother Peers; for some of them whom I could name, who are the loudest in their condemnation of long speeches on the part of other noble Lords, are in the habit of delivering prolix addresses themselves. The noble marquis always speaks to the point. If there is neither depth nor originality in his matter, his speeches have the redeeming characteristic of never containing a sentence which is irrelevant to the question before the House. He has no ambition to say anything fine: he never aims at effect of any kind. He takes a plain business-like view of any topic on which he speaks, and expresses himself in a plain unpretending manner. I know of nothing that would induce him to make any sort of flourish. So far from panting after cheers, as many of our legislators in both houses of parliament do, I am convinced a manifestation of applause would grate on his ear, and render him quite uncomfortable.

His Lordship has at different times filled various offices in the government. He was on several occasions, President of the Council. His first appointment to this office was in 1782, and his last in 1807. In 1795 he was made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, but did not long retain the situation.

The manner of the noble marquis is as unassuming

as his matter is unpretending. He has very little gesture; he stands almost motionless before their Lordships. His voice is rather strong: he speaks slowly, and with much distinctness. He is always audible, without being what is called a loud speaker.

In person the Marquis of Camden is about the average height, with a slight tendency to robustness. In his features there is nothing remarkable. His face has something of a sallow hue. The expression of his countenance is that of a plain, honest-minded man. His appearance altogether has much of the country gentleman in it. He is exceedingly partial to riding on horseback, and, unlike the class of society in which he is accustomed to move, usually prefers the Strand and other streets in the heart of London to the Park, or any of the other resorts of equestrian or "wheeled" fashionables. When riding out on horseback, the noble marquis has no other attendant but a boy in undress livery. His Lordship is now an old man, being in his sixty-eighth year.

The Marquis of WESTMEATH does not often take part in the proceedings of the House, and still less frequently speaks at any length; but no one who ever heard him utter a few sentences could be at a loss to distinguish him afterwards from the other Peers. Not only has he a strong Irish brogue when he speaks—stronger perhaps than that of any other noble Lord in the House—but his voice has a curious, indescribable squeaking tone about it, the strange effect of which is considerably aggravated by the hasty manner of his speaking. He

usually speaks under a greater or less degree of excitement, however few the observations he makes, and whatever the subject. His words generally flow from him with such rapidity, that very few of them have any justice done to them in the way of pronunciation. For this reason it is sometimes difficult to catch every word which the noble marquis utters. But in addition to the defect of his voice, and the imperfection of his elocution, he has acquired a ludicrous habit of thrusting up his right hand perpendicularly above his head, and then, with his fist closed, excepting the first finger which is stretched out in a horizontal position, so as to give his hand precisely the appearance of a figure on a sign-post, he flourishes his arm in the air. This favourite peculiarity of the noble marquis's gesture has often reminded me of the way in which Mr. Vandenhoff and some others of our more popular tragedians are in the habit of flourishing their right arm perpendicularly above their heads, when enacting the celebrated scene in Shakspeare's "*Coriolanus*," in which the leading character in the piece exclaims in tones of self-gratulation and triumph—

—— "Like an eagle in a dove-cot
I fluttered the Volscians in Corioli:
Alone I did it!"

The longest speech, if I am not mistaken, which the noble marquis has made in the House of Lords for the last five or six years, was the one in which, in July last year, he arraigned the conduct of government in reference to their administration of the affairs of Ireland. That speech occupied, as nearly as I can remember, from twenty to thirty minutes in the delivery, and, if

it was exceedingly violent, it certainly displayed respectable talent. The most singular circumstance connected with it was that of the noble marquis resuming his seat without making any motion. A thing so unusual called up Lord Brougham, who is always ready to admonish noble lords of any departure of which they may be guilty, unintentionally or otherwise, from the usages of the House. The noble and learned lord having complained that the noble marquis, after so violent and criminatory a speech against ministers, should not have concluded with some motion,

The noble Marquis rose and said—"The noble and learned lord having called me up again—"

"Oh, Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Lord Brougham, in his own peculiarly sarcastic manner, amidst roars of laughter from both sides of the house.

The noble marquis cannot be said to be a man of superior talents; but he is by no means deficient in acuteness, and possesses a very respectable amount of political information, especially on topics connected with Ireland. He is a most zealous Tory, always identifying himself with the measures adopted by the most ultra section of the Conservative peers. He is pretty regular in his attendance on his parliamentary duties, and very rarely misses being present when Irish affairs are expected to come before the House. For some years past he has usually sat in the centre of the house, on the first row of benches. This, as I have before observed, is the place in which the Duke of Wellington sits. I mention the fact, because of the opportunity it affords me of stating, that the breach which sometime

existed between the noble marquis and the noble duke, in consequence of some misunderstanding in the family of the former, and which he made the subject of a lengthened pamphlet, is now healed.

The personal appearance of the noble marquis is striking. He is tall and slender, and has a thin face and a dark complexion. His age is fifty-three.

The Earl of SHAFTESBURY has been for many years chairman of committees in the Lords. For the noble earl's services in that capacity he receives a very handsome salary. As a speaker he is quite unknown in the house. To hear him make a speech, if even of a couple of minutes' duration, would be quite an era in their Lordships' proceedings. I am not aware that he has delivered half-a-dozen sentences on any question before the house for a number of years past. I am at a loss to understand why the noble earl preserves this unbroken silence on the questions that come before their Lordships. There are many peers on both sides of the house, whose very countenances tell you that they are no speakers—that, in fact, nature never intended them for oratorical distinction. In the Earl of Shaftesbury's case you come to no such previous conclusion. My impression is, that let a person who is a perfect stranger to all their Lordships be put into the house, and asked to point out which of them, judging from their respective appearances, he would suppose to be most in the habit of addressing their Lordships, and the chances are in favour of his fixing on the noble earl in one of his first half-dozen guesses, if not in the very first guess. There

is not a more lively or bustling peer in the house, or one whom you would suppose more ready at all times to address their Lordships. Yet the fact is as I have stated, as to the silence he preserves; and it goes far to confirm me in the hypothesis, that there is no dependence on appearances.

Some of the noble earl's ancestors occupy a distinguished place in the page of history. To the Earl of Shaftesbury of a former period, namely, the third quarter of the seventeenth century, we are indebted for the Habeas Corpus Act, which some people call the second charter of our liberties. That great and liberal measure originated with the then Earl of Shaftesbury, and it was chiefly through his exertions that it was carried through parliament. In 1662, the noble earl was made Lord High Chancellor of England; an office of great importance and responsibility at any time, but especially so at that eventful period. It was the same noble earl who first brought in a bill for making the judges independent of the crown. The present Earl of Shaftesbury is understood to be proud of his ancestors; and when he can number among them such a man as he to whom I have alluded, there is no room for wonder at the circumstance.

As chairman of the committees, the noble earl must of course open his mouth; but then he has only to repeat certain standard phrases, which he inherited from his predecessors in the same office, and which, I presume, have been in use from time immemorial, as they will most probably be handed down to posterity. Those phrases relate to the passing of the clauses of a bill, and

to the House "resuming," as it is technically called, &c. In the use of the phrases to which I refer, the noble earl is highly accomplished, if I may use the term. His manner, when presiding in committees of the whole House, is pleasant and lively. He has an intimate acquaintance with the forms of the House on such occasions, and performs his duty with great expedition, and yet without ever falling into any serious error. When the clauses of a bill are rapidly passing, it is amusing to see the celerity with which he withdraws his spectacles from his eyes, and replaces them again. He appears to have a decided objection, as if from principle, to looking their Lordships in the face through the intervention of his glasses. The moment he finishes reading any clause of a bill, up go the spectacles, which are of the old-fashioned kind, to the crown of his head, in order that he may look their Lordships in the face while he puts it to them "that this clause stand part of the bill." No sooner is this said, than down go the spectacles again to their proper place, that he may be enabled to read the next clause. The same process is constantly repeated while the noble earl is discharging the duties of his office.

The Earl of Shaftesbury, as may be inferred from what I have already stated, is free and easy in his manner. He has nothing of the aristocrat in his appearance. He dresses with great plainness, and invariably wears black clothes and a white neckerchief. He is short in stature, and rather fully made. He has an oval face, in which there are sundry incipient wrinkles; a circumstance not to be wondered at when it is remembered

that sixty-eight years have passed over his head. His face partakes in a slight degree of a sallow hue. Of hair, his head does not boast of a rich harvest: what there is, is of an iron-gray colour. His nose is moderately prominent, and his eyes, which are of a grayish appearance, are also rather large. His forehead is straight. In the expression of his countenance there is nothing remarkable. It is pleasant, and by no means without intelligence. What the noble earl's pretensions may be in point of talent, is a matter on which I am not competent to express an opinion, never having heard him address their Lordships, nor seen any written production from his pen. He is much esteemed by men of all parties. Indeed his singularly plain and unassuming manners could not fail to insure the kindly feeling of all with whom he has occasion to come in contact.

The Earl of STANHOPE is the nephew of the celebrated William Pitt, and is, as might be expected, proud of the relationship. He sits on the Tory benches, and is decidedly Conservative in his political views; but he very rarely mixes himself up in any way with mere party questions. The subjects to which he chiefly applies his mind, and on which he speaks in his place in the House of Lords, are questions which bear more directly on the happiness of his countrymen, and especially the poorer classes of them. I say nothing of the general soundness of his notions respecting the measures which ought to be adopted with a view to the amelioration of the lower orders of the community; but this I will say, that I do not believe there is in the

house a single peer who feels more strongly for the poor, or who is more sincerely anxious to better their circumstances. He is a man of great kindliness of disposition, and is always ready to put himself to any amount of trouble to promote what he conceives the best measures for lightening the load of human misery. He is pre-eminently entitled to the appellation of "the poor man's friend." I need hardly repeat, that I here speak of the noble earl's intentions, without meaning to say that his projects are at all times best calculated to accomplish his benevolent purposes. Some of his views are of a character which will be best understood when I apply the term crotchets to them. He is one of the most zealous opponents of the New Poor Law measure. It is not often that, in a work of this nature, I express my own opinions on any controverted subject when referring to the opinions of others; but believing, as I do, the great interests of humanity to be involved in the New Poor Law Bill, I could not reconcile it to my own convictions of duty, were I not to take this opportunity of expressing my cordial concurrence in the opposition which the noble earl offers to that measure. I regard it as a measure which is equally at variance with the revelations of the gospel, and the kindlier dictates of our common nature. Christianity says, and the marriage ceremony of the church, grounded as it is on the religion of the New Testament, says, that nothing but death shall separate man and wife: the New Poor Law Act speaks a very different language. It says that man and wife, however devotedly attached to each other, shall be parted; and it does accordingly part them. I

wonder whether the framers and abettors of this most monstrous clause of the measure ever thought of the solemn injunction—"Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

But as the discussion of such topics is inconsistent with the plan of this work, I must content myself with simply recording my opinion, that the New Poor Law Bill is a positive disgrace to a christian and civilized country. The Earl of Stanhope is, as before stated, one of the most strenuous opponents of that bill; there are other noble lords in the Upper House who share his sentiments on the subject; but he stands almost alone in his fearless and repeated denunciations of it.

The noble earl is a man of very considerable scientific acquirements. In this respect he is a worthy successor of his father; for the name of the latter is intimately associated with the science of the country. The noble earl's taste for scientific pursuits is sufficiently indicated by his frequent attendance at scientific meetings, his earnest efforts to promote science in every practicable way, and in the extent of his intercourse with scientific men.

In the year 1832, the Earl of Stanhope quitted the House of Lords altogether, in consequence of the refusal of Earl Gray's government to adopt his suggestion for the appointment of a commission to visit the West Indies, with the view of ascertaining the real state of slavery there, before legislating for the emancipation of the negroes. He talked, when announcing his intention of quitting the House, as if he meant never to return to an assembly which, in his opinion, disregarded

the first principles of enlightened legislation. He only, however, absented himself from it for three years.

The noble earl is a man of great firmness and decision of character. The moment he sees the path of duty to be plain, that moment he resolves at all hazards to walk in it. Expediency is a thing to which he is practically an utter stranger. He has moral courage enough to enable him to brave every possible consequence which may result from the course he determines upon pursuing. It matters not to him though he stand alone in his advocacy of any particular measure; nor is he to be diverted from his purpose by the sneers or ridicule, any more than by the open opposition, of those who are hostile to his views. In the House of Lords he has given repeated proofs of this, under circumstances of a very peculiar nature. He has, too, on various occasions presided at public meetings, when not one of the order to which he belongs would, on any account, even though approving of the objects of the meeting, have consented to take the chair. It is only to be regretted that his zeal in this respect, in what he conceives to be the cause of justice and humanity, should not always be requited as it ought. About eighteen months since, if private report speak truth, some of his neighbours on the platform at a public meeting in the Crown and Anchor Tavern, at which he presided on the subject of the New Poor Law, stole his gold snuff-box. But for the criminality of the thing itself, one could almost smile at the ingenious way in which it was done. He had laid down the box on the table before him while addressing the meeting; and the swell mob, who had

elbowed their way to the platform, conceiving it to be the field which promised the most productive harvest, having seen, as they themselves express it, an "excellent chance,"—set up a tremendous clapping of hands, knocking on the table, stamping on the floor, and so forth, by way of applauding a particular sentence. The hint thus given to a crowded platform, as well as the meeting generally, was not lost on those on whom it was chiefly intended to operate. The example of the swell mob was promptly followed by all present. Their call was at once responded to. Perfect thunders of applause greeted the ears of the noble speaker. There was not a hand within reach of the table that did not lustily thump it. "The gold box shared in the approbation bestowed on its noble proprietor's speech: in the excess of its joy it responded to the forcible application of fists to the table, by repeated leaps, until it at last danced over and fell on the floor." This was the object aimed at. The box was promptly picked up, but by whom is still a mystery to the noble earl. He has never seen it since, and doubtless thinks the "tremendous applause" he received on the occasion was but a poor compensation for the loss of so valuable an article.

As a speaker the noble earl does not rank high. He does not want resources, but his manner is not in his favour. He is unable to pronounce the letter *r* without a curious burring sound; and his pronunciation altogether is indistinct, just as if he had some impediment in his mouth to his giving a full enunciation of the word. His voice, too, has a curious sound, which I do not well know how to describe. It reminds me sometimes of the

guttural way in which many of the Germans speak. His utterance is variable: it is sometimes too rapid, but is usually rather slow. He now and then hesitates—never for want of ideas or words, but in consequence of his using the wrong one when two or three present themselves to his mind at the same time. His manner is generally good, but never profound or sparkling. He speaks with much ease. His action is monotonous. It almost exclusively consists of a pretty liberal use of his right arm, with his hand clenched, and an occasional movement of his body from one part of the floor to the other. He dresses in an antiquated manner. Some idea of his costume may be formed, when I mention that it resembles that of a Quaker in shape, though different in colour. The noble earl always dresses in black, and wears a dark brown wig, which is a piece of workmanship so creditable to the skill of the perruquier, that most people mistake it for an abundant crop of natural hair. He is a handsome man, and is about the usual size both in height and breadth. He has a clear healthy-looking complexion, and possesses regular features, with the exception of a rather large mouth, which has a still larger appearance when he speaks, in consequence of the extent to which he opens it in the enunciation of certain sentences. His forehead is straight and broad, and his eyebrows are prominent, though not unpleasantly so. He has dark clear eyes, at once indicative of benevolence and intelligence. He looks younger than he is; though in his fifty-seventh year, you would take him to be under fifty.

CHAPTER V.

CONSERVATIVE PEERS.

(CONTINUED.)

The Earl of Falmouth—The Earl of Devon—The Earl of Glengall—Lord Beresford—Lord Strangford—Lord Rolle—Lord Redesdale—Lord Alvanley.

THE EARL OF FALMOUTH is a nobleman of considerable influence among the Conservative party, especially among that section of them known by the name of Ultra-Tories. He does not speak with any frequency, neither do his speeches, when he does address their Lordships, extend to any great length. I am surprised that he speaks so seldom; for, in addition to his ardent attachment to his Tory principles, he acquits himself very creditably when he addresses their Lordships. You are not struck with anything he says, as indicating superior talents; he is never eloquent or profound; but there is a smoothness in his language, and an ease—some would say a gracefulness—in his delivery, which always prepossesses his hearers in his favour, in so far as relates to the attributes of good speaking. The general observation of those who hear him for the first time, is to the effect that they are surprised that one who speaks in so creditable a manner is not better known in the house as a speaker. His voice is pleasant, and his elocution good. His delivery is fluent, and its efficiency is seldom impaired by a stammer or a mo-

mentary hesitation as to the phraseology in which he ought to clothe his ideas. His manner is cool and dispassionate; it is so, on many occasions, to a fault;—a little more animation and energy in his mode of speaking would ensure greater attention, and produce a deeper impression on their Lordships. The noble earl's coolness when speaking is the more remarkable, when it is recollected that a man more thoroughly or devotedly attached to his principles, or more intensely anxious for their ascendancy in the councils of his sovereign, and their triumph in the country, does not exist.

He possesses moral courage in no ordinary degree. He never shrinks from the assertion of his opinions, however unpopular they may be. He was a zealous opponent of the New Poor Law Bill, and was one of the small band—eleven in number, if I remember rightly—who divided the house against the most obnoxious clauses of that measure.

His gesticulation, as will be inferred from the observations I have already made, is hardly worthy of the name. He seldom moves his face or body from the time he rises until he resumes his seat; and gentle, indeed, is the motion he imparts to his arms. His appearance is dignified; some people say it indicates a certain degree of haughtiness. The noble earl is exceedingly partial to surtouts of a green colour, and to light waistcoats. He is a handsome looking nobleman. His features are small and regular. His complexion is pale, and his hair, which is abundant and has a bristly appearance, seems as if beginning to exchange a sandy colour for a greyish hue. He has a high well-formed

forehead. The expression of his countenance has a degree of thoughtfulness about it, mingled with reserve. He is about the middle size, and proportionably formed. He is in the meridian of life, being in his fiftieth year. Formerly the noble earl used to sit on the first row of benches on the left of the Lord Chancellor; but during the present session he has nightly patronised, by his occupation of it, one of the two cross woolsacks, always sitting with his face to the table. That was the Marquis of Londonderry's favourite spot; and when the noble marquis returns to the performance of his senatorial duties, I have no doubt that the Earl of Falmouth will give up, however reluctantly, his present seat to the proprietor of Holderness-house, out of respect to a sort of proscriptive right which the latter may be said to have acquired to it through long possession.

The Earl of Devon has been long in the House of Lords, though not in the capacity of a peer. It is only two or three years since he succeeded to the peerage. His lordship was previously plain Mr. Courtenay, and acted for a number of years in the capacity of chief clerk to their Lordships. I am not sure if there be any other instance on record of a servant of the House of Lords succeeding to a peerage, and afterwards sitting, voting, and acting among the very men whom he formerly was obliged to look up to as superiors. In his capacity of clerk to their Lordships, the noble earl was highly and universally esteemed. The best proof of this was to be found in the fact, that when he succeeded to the peerage in 1835, as next of kin to the late Earl of Devon, who died in Paris that year without issue, he received,

on the motion of Lord Melbourne, seconded by the Duke of Wellington, the unanimous thanks of their Lordships "for the very able and talented manner in which he had discharged the duties of his office for fifteen years." As yet the noble earl has not spoken often; not, I believe, above six or seven times, and then only briefly, and on questions of minor interest. He speaks with some deliberation: occasionally he appears as if he were at a loss for a word, but on the whole gets on with considerable seeming ease. I have seen nothing in any effort he has yet made, which would justify the opinion that he is destined to attain any distinction as a speaker. His matter has nothing in it above mediocrity, while his manner wants animation. His voice is sufficiently distinct; but it either has not flexibility, or he does not turn its capabilities to account. His lordship, however, promises to be a useful man in the business matters of the house; the situation of principal clerk, which he so long filled, having necessarily afforded him an intimate acquaintance with all the forms and matters of a business character.

The noble earl slightly exceeds the usual height, and is proportionably formed. He is of a sallow complexion, of regular features, and of an open, intelligent expression of countenance. He is about his fifty-fifth year. He does not take an active part in politics, but is understood to be warmly attached to his Conservative principles, and to hold that there can be no good government where that government is not based on those principles.

The Earl of GLENGALL used to be pretty regular in

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his attendance on his parliamentary duties, and took part with some frequency in the proceedings. Of late years his presence in the house has been comparatively rare; while, as regards speaking, I do not recollect any address worthy of the name of a speech, which he has made to their Lordships for a session or two past. This is the more to be wondered at, as converts to a new class of opinions are usually very zealous, for sometime after the change, in the support of those principles which they have adopted. I take it for granted that most of my readers are aware that within the last few years the noble earl has abjured the Liberal sentiments in which he was educated, and with which he at first identified himself, and thrown himself into the arms of the Conservatives. He seldom, at any time, spoke at any length, but his speeches were usually characterized by considerable talent, and by no small literary taste. He speaks with much ease, and in a clear and distinct tone of voice. His manner is not assuming: it is rather subdued and unpretending. The noble earl's personal appearance is somewhat at variance with his manner when addressing their Lordships. He is foppish in his dress, and his beautiful black hair is formed into so many curls—some of which overlap his brow—as to give his head a good deal of the appearance of that of a woman. His complexion is dark, and his face thin; it has something of a Jewish conformation. He is tall, and of a slender make. He is understood to be exceedingly fond of theatricals; but it is not so generally known that he has written some pieces for representation on the stage. What their number is, I do not know;

neither am I acquainted with any of their names except one: and that is one with the name of which everybody is familiar, and which all the play-going public have seen acted with more or less frequency. I allude to "The Irish Tutor," one of the most popular farces of the present day, and which, when well acted, never fails to convulse the audience with laughter. Lord Glengall is in his forty-fourth year.

LORD BERESFORD is better known as a military officer, and as a decided Conservative in his politics, than as a speaker in the House of Lords. The noble viscount's abilities as a general may be inferred from the fact, that he was entrusted with the command of the British army in Spain during the Duke of Wellington's unavoidable absence from that country. A few years ago Lord Beresford was noted for the regularity of his attendance in his place in parliament; but within the last two or three years I have not often seen him in the house. He never spoke with any frequency, and never long at a time; of late he can hardly be said to have spoken at all. He has a strong loud voice, and his enunciation is deliberate and distinct. His matter is always good; so much so, that his own party generally regret there is not more of it. There is all the straightforwardness of the soldier about it. If his periods want rounding, his ideas have generally the quality of good sense in their favour. The noble viscount is tall and of a robust figure. He has a full face, with a dark complexion, and rather darkish hair. He has quite a soldier-like appearance. His age is about sixty-five.

VISCOUNT STRANGFORD is one of those noble lords who

never speak on questions of a party nature, or of national importance; but who invariably address their Lordships when particular subjects, to which they have specially directed their attention, are brought under consideration. The noble viscount's vote is always ready, either by word of mouth or through the medium of some Tory peer into whose pocket he commits his proxy, to support the party with whom he is identified; but he would no more think of making a regular speech on any question involving the fate of a government, than he would of addressing a regular sermon to their Lordships. Were he, however, to see that some noble lord had given notice of a motion for a particular evening, on the subject of the silk or glove trade, or any of those other commercial questions in which he takes a special interest, he would hurry to London, though four or five hundred miles distant at the time, in order that he might be present at the debate, and have an opportunity of taking part in the discussion. And it is but justice to the noble viscount to say that on such subjects he is exceedingly well informed. I question if there be a noble lord in the house equally conversant with them. He is a great opponent of the free trade system, and has on repeated occasions distinguished himself as the friend and advocate of the Coventry weavers.

The noble viscount is also well versed in matters appertaining to the foreign policy of the country, and seldom suffers a discussion on such topics to take place in the house without expressing his views at some length. The situation he filled for some years as British ambassador at Constantinople, naturally led him to

turn his attention in some considerable degree to the foreign policy of the country whose sovereign he represented. On such topics he always makes a very intelligent speech, though, as a matter of course, his speeches are invariably more or less deeply tinged with his peculiar political opinions.

The noble viscount speaks with considerable ease and fluency; but he has no pretensions to the character of an eloquent speaker. He has abundant self-possession—some people would call it a feeling of confidence amounting to conceit. He is a never at a loss for words: sometimes his words are more abundant than his ideas. Of the latter, however, he seldom displays any poverty, though they are never of a striking or commanding order. It is in the common-sense character of his matter that the principal merit of his addresses consists. His manner has nothing peculiar in it; his delivery is rather deliberate. He has a fine clear voice, and a distinct articulation. His gesture is moderate enough. He is rather a cold speaker. I never yet saw him animated or energetic, and he is the same throughout; the same in the middle and at the close as he is at the beginning.

Lord Strangford is said to possess considerable literary taste. I am not aware of any prose production of his, with the exception of a pamphlet in which he vehemently attacked the government of Mr. Canning in 1827, and Mr. Canning himself personally. He is the author of several pieces of poetry, which are said to be very respectable productions, though not much known beyond the circle of his private friends. He is the avowed translator of several of Camoens' poems.

In his personal appearance there is nothing striking. His height is about five feet nine, and his breadth is proportionable. He has a sharp nose, which is usually surmounted by a pair of handsome spectacles. His complexion is dark, and his hair of a brownish colour. His face is of an oval form, and has a rather intelligent though reserved expression. In his dress he is very fastidious. He is one of the greatest dandies in the house. His age is fifty-two.

LORD ROLLE owes much of the prominency which he enjoys as a public man to a very unusual but very excellent trait in his character. I refer to the great, indeed I may say unprecedented liberality of his subscriptions for the promotion of any object which he deems commendable. It is pleasant to see a nobleman of great wealth thus disposed to part with a portion of it in furthering what he conceives to be the great interests of mankind. He is a most zealous, and I doubt not, a most conscientious churchman; and his name has on some occasions stood on list of subscriptions for church purposes, for the princely sum of 2,000*l.*; on repeated occasions the sum of 1,000*l.* has been appended to his name for religious purposes connected with the establishment. Until the present session, the noble lord was remarkable for the punctuality of his attendance on his parliamentary duties; what the cause is of his irregular attendance this session, I have not the means of knowing. He very rarely, at any time, took part in the debates; but he was distinguished for the number of the petitions which he was in the habit of presenting, and which he usually prefaced with a few observations.

He has a strong, steady voice, considering his advanced age; for he is in his eighty-second year. He is a tall man, with a little stoop. Though not robust now, I think it probable he must have been so to some extent when in the vigour of manhood. The many years which have passed over his head, have not only tinged his hair with a grayish colour, but have formed various deep wrinkles in his face.

LORD REDESDALE, son of the late distinguished noble and learned lord of that name, does not often address their Lordships; but when he does, he is always listened to with much attention by both sides of the house. He is one of the few noblemen who is never heard without one's feeling a regret that he does not speak oftener. Were he desirous of obtaining celebrity as a speaker, he would only have to address their Lordships ten or twelve times in a session, and from three-quarters of an hour to an hour at a time, to have his wishes gratified. I do not say that he would, by any amount of industry, or by any effort he could make, ever attain to the distinction of an orator, in the sense in which the term is usually understood; but he certainly would earn for himself the reputation of being a highly respectable speaker. He has no pretensions to talents of a lofty kind, far less to genius; but he certainly does possess abilities considerably above mediocrity. His talents are of the useful, not of the shining class. There are few noblemen in the house who possess a greater fund of good sense, or of that practical knowledge which is often much more useful to society than even genius itself. It is his lordship's great good sense, united as

it is to a very unassuming manner, and an undoubted honesty of purpose, that always insures the deepest attention on the part of the noble lords to whatever he says. He is happy in stripping a question of all irrelevant matter, and viewing it in connexion with its practical bearings. His perceptions are acute; and he has a great aptitude for placing a point before the minds of others in exactly the same view in which it appears to his own. He applies himself as closely to the real merits of a measure, as if it were impossible for him to wander from them. Almost every sentence either embodies an argument, removes a misconception, or states a fact. This accounts for the circumstance of his never speaking at any length on the few occasions in which he addresses their Lordships. I do not recollect ever having heard him speak longer than twelve or fifteen minutes at a time; very rarely so long.

Lord Redesdale's manner is unpretending, but agreeable. He has a fine, clear, distinct voice, which, when he becomes animated, has something sonorous in its tones. His utterance is well timed; if it err on either side, it is on that of rapidity. In the use of gesticulation, he is moderate: he looks straight across to the ministerial benches, and has all the appearance, both in his countenance and his manner, of one who is conscious of the truth and justice of what he is saying. He slightly moves his right arm in ordinary circumstances; in his more energetic moments he presses the left also into his service.

His lordship is chiefly useful in matters of business, and in them he seems to take particular delight. The

Earl of Devon lately mentioned, in the hearing of a gentleman who repeated the observation to me, that in a few years Lord Redesdale will, in all probability, be unequalled as a business-man in the House of Lords. No man is better qualified to speak to a matter of this kind than the Earl of Devon here, owing to the circumstance, as before stated, of his having been so many years clerk to the House of Lords.

Lord Redesdale is very plain in his personal appearance. His face is round, and his complexion florid. He has always an ample harvest of hair, of a red colour, and a pair of whiskers of more than the average dimensions. He is no patron of the West-end hairdressers; at least there is no appearance of anything of the kind to the eye of the spectator. He is short, and rather thickly set. He might increase his apparent altitude, were he to use boots or shoes of the usual thickness in the soles and heels; but to anything of that kind he has an unconquerable aversion. At all seasons, and under all circumstances, you see his lordship's feet inserted in low thin shoes. Indeed you would fancy, as you see him standing or walking on the floor of the house, that he wears dancing-pumps; just as if, instead of legislating for the empire, he were about to trip the light fantastic toe in Almack's. His snow-white stockings would only serve to strengthen the impression: so would his white neckerchief. The only part of his apparel which would militate against the hypothesis, would be his coat and trousers. These two articles in his costume are, as a tailor would say, of a very plain cut. He is partial to having good measure: he likes abundant

room in his clothes. You never see him without a buff waistcoat. The coat and trousers are always blue; the former being moderately studded with yellow buttons. Such is Lord Redesdale's unvarying dress. To any other colour than blue he has an antipathy, which nothing but the loss of a near relative can overcome. As for dandyism, again, he would rather submit to almost anything, than consent to appear in fashionable apparel. That is a thing which would put his philosophy to fault: it would be to him a species of martyrdom itself. Nor can any consideration prevail on him to wear a great-coat or cloak. During the most intensely cold days of January last, he was to be seen in the neighbourhood of Whitehall and other places, without any other protection against the remarkable severity of the weather than I have described; and he appeared as comfortable as if the season had been that of summer.

The noble lord is exceedingly attentive to his parliamentary duties. I know of few peers who are more so. He is generally to be seen near the table, on one of the cross woolsacks. As he is only in his thirty-third year, he promises to be a man of considerable importance in the house. His politics are moderately Toryish.

LORD ALVANLEY, son of the late Lord Chief Justice Alvanley, of the Court of Common Pleas, occasionally makes a short speech in the house; but he is one of those whose names are rendered more familiar to the public by something which has occurred out of doors, than by anything they have said or done within the

walls of the house. Lord Alvanley brought himself into very prominent notice, two or three years ago, by a squabble which he and Mr. O'Connell had together, and which terminated in a duel between the noble lord and Mr. Morgan O'Connell, each of the parties having, contrary to the usages observed on such occasions, fired three shots. The affair had its origin in the circumstance of Lord Alvanley having taunted Lord Melbourne with having purchased, for a valuable consideration, the votes of Mr. O'Connell and his party. And this charge, both against Lord Melbourne and Mr. O'Connell, was followed by an attempt on the part of Lord Alvanley to get the member for Dublin expelled from Brookes' club. This drew forth, from Mr. O'Connell, in the House of Commons, the following pointed passage:—"There was a creature, half-idiot, half-maniac, it would seem, elsewhere, that did not hesitate to use language there which he knew he would not be allowed to use in other places. The bloated buffoon, too, who had talked of them as he did, might learn the distinction between independent men, and those whose votes were not worth purchasing, even if they were in the market." This was doubtless unjustifiably strong language, and such as no man, according to the existing code of honour, could permit to pass unnoticed. Lord Alvanley accordingly challenged Mr. O'Connell, but the latter, having registered a vow in heaven against duelling, refused to accept it. His son Morgan, however, at once came forward, and putting himself in his father's place, fought a duel, as above stated, with the noble lord.

Lord Alvanley has the reputation of being a great wit. He is understood to be a man of respectable literary taste, and acquits himself very creditably in making a short speech. His manner is quiet and subdued. He usually sits, when in the house, on the left hand of the Lord Chancellor, close to the woolsack. He is however, celebrated for the regularity of his attendance in the house. Formerly he was considered a sort of neutral or independent man in politics; but latterly he has identified himself closely with the Conservative party. He is said to be indolent. He is in his forty-ninth year.

CHAPTER VI.

LIBERAL PEERS.

*The Marquis of Sligo—The Marquis of Northampton—
The Earl of Roseberry—The Earl of Gosford.*

THE Marquis of SLIGO is better known as the late Governor of Jamaica than as a member of the House of Lords. In the latter place he has never done anything to distinguish himself. There he rarely speaks at all, and never at any length. I have no recollection of having seen him occupy the attention of his fellow peers for more than three or four minutes at one time. He is diffident of his own powers as a speaker; and he has not, nor ever had, the notion that nature intended him to shine in the senate. It were well if some other noble lords, who could be named, entertained an equally mo-

dest opinion of their own capabilities for public speaking. It would spare themselves the unpleasantness of having to labour hard before they can utter two consecutive sentences in tolerable taste. It would save them many a "hem" and forced cough, which—so, at least, one would suppose—must be the reverse of agreeable to their own feelings; to say nothing of the infliction which such speakers must prove to the house. The noble marquis carries his diffidence to excess. I do not say that he possesses any of the leading attributes of an effective public speaker; but if he had more confidence in himself, he might, on ordinary occasions, and on ordinary subjects, acquit himself in a very creditable manner in addressing their Lordships. As it is, he speaks with some difficulty; his matter has nothing attractive in it beyond its common sense. His style has nothing approaching to elegance: it is as homely as the greatest lovers of that quality could wish. And his manner is in keeping with it. It is plain and unassuming to a fault. The noble marquis, however, is a highly intelligent man. He is especially conversant with those subjects to which circumstances have rendered it necessary that he should particularly apply his mind. He also possesses a sound judgment. And last, though assuredly not least, he is an upright and conscientious man, in all the public as well as private relations of life. Integrity is a quality which is peculiarly deserving the respect of mankind, when embodied in the conduct of men who are placed in situations where temptations to a different course are numerous and powerful. The fact that the Marquis of Sligo should have come home

from the West Indies one of the most zealous vindicators of the rights of the slave, considering the inducements which must have been presented to him to feel and act differently, is of itself a conclusive fact in favour of his conscientiousness as a public man. If anything could have afforded me a gratification equal to that with which I heard the almost superhuman speech of Lord Brougham, in February last, on behalf of the negroes—a speech which for brilliancy, eloquence, and power, has perhaps never been exceeded in either house of parliament; if anything could have equalled the gratification with which I listened to that splendid speech, it would have been the cordial cheers with which the noble marquis greeted the more important parts of it. Those cheers, considering the place and the circumstances in which they were given, must have been melody in the ears of every humane man who heard them. To my mind they were proof, taking all things into account, not only of a kindly nature, but of the strictest honesty of character.

In March last the noble marquis published a pamphlet on the subject of Negro Slavery in the West Indies, which is pervaded throughout by a spirit of the most enlightened humanity. The pamphlet is entitled “Jamaica under the Apprenticeship System.” It is a production* of great interest, whether the source whence

* The following tribute to the missionaries of Jamaica, a body of men who have been most grossly calumniated, is equally creditable to the noble Marquis's head and heart. It will be observed that he speaks in the third person:

“They (the planters) looked upon the dissenting missionaries

it proceeds, or the subject, or the manner in which the subject is treated, be considered.

The noble marquis is one of the most corpulent men

also as the fomenters of rebellion, and promoters of discontent and disobedience on the part of the negroes; an opinion often maintained in England by persons connected with the colony. Lord Sligo, after a very short period, expressed his conviction of their great value; acknowledged the obligations which were due to them for their exertions to promote the spiritual instruction of the blacks; and stated that, in his opinion, almost all the religious feeling which existed among the slaves was derived from their efforts. That such is the truth cannot be denied; and it is equally true that their unpopularity arose from their having confronted all dangers, and nearly encountered martyrdom, by their noble attempts to protect the slave from severities which, though then permissible by law, could never be considered justifiable in the sight of God. They were too loyal subjects, and too good Christians, to be guilty of what they were so generally reproached with; namely, trying to make the negroes discontented with their lot, or, as the usual phrase runs there, 'disturbing the minds of the negroes,' or exciting them to revolutionary projects. The disturbance of the mind of the negroes consisted in their boldly opposing every danger, to protect them from the abuses of the law as it then stood; and inducing them to bear patiently the grievances of which they complained, by pointing out to them the certainty of approaching relief through the medium of the British Parliament. These men were truly objects to be cherished; and the support they received from Lord Sligo was one cause of his unpopularity in the colony, and of the resolute opposition which his measures encountered."

The noble marquis concludes his pamphlet with the following vivid picture of society in Jamaica:

"In truth, there is no justice in the general local institutions of Jamaica; because there is no public opinion to which an appeal can be made. Slavery has divided society into two classes; to one it has given power, but to the other it has not extended
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in the house: perhaps he is exceeded in this particular by none of the peers, except the Duke of Sussex and the Duke of Buckingham. I am not sure indeed whether,

protection. One of these classes is above public opinion, and the other is below it; neither are, therefore, under its influence; and it is much to be feared, that owing to the want of sympathy between them, to the want of dependence and mutual confidence, to the poorer class being able to provide for the necessities of life without any application to the higher, there never will be in Jamaica, or any other slave colony, a community of feeling on which public opinion can operate beneficially. There now exists, indeed, something so termed, but it does not deserve the name; it makes the timid man afraid to act rightly, and confirms the designing intriguer in his schemes. It is to be hoped that this complete separation may melt away, and that some kind of approximation of the two classes may arise. The prospects otherwise may be awful. Great indeed is the blindness which does not see this, great indeed is the fatuity which does not provide against it. What must be the feeling of the negro towards those who show such an utter want of confidence in him, that all the public acts are of a stringent nature? that they may deprive him of the only trade which he is able with his limited means to engage in—namely, with the next island, St. Domingo, lest he should there learn too much of the common right of all people in a representative state—namely, a share in the representation. If that scheme has not succeeded, it is not to the white inhabitants of Jamaica that the negroes owe its failure, but to the British government. Can the negro endure to have himself cursed and called '*a — black rascal*' on all occasions? Can he like to have all sense of morality and decency outraged in the persons of his wife and daughters? Let the inhabitants of Jamaica look to these things in time, and remedy the evil before it is too late. Let them recollect that unless they regain the confidence of those from whom alone free labour can be obtained, the year 1840 will be the unprofitable commencement of a series of still more unprofitable years; that if the negroes do

in proportion to their height, he is not in point of breadth equal to them. I should take the noble marquis to be about five feet eight inches in height. His head has a

not labour freely in 1840, it will be difficult, with their small necessities, to induce them to do so at any future period. Let them support; and not on every occasion vilify; their religious teachers, to whom they already owe more of the good conduct of the negroes than they are willing to acknowledge. Let them not endeavour to diminish the natural and legitimate influence of those excellent men, the missionaries, whose assistance they may perhaps one day themselves require. Let them not imagine, because the skin of the negroes is darker than their own, that they have not the feelings of men. Let them not suppose that when these despised blacks are free, and when they gain the additional knowledge which the change in their social condition will inevitably impart, they will calmly submit as they have hitherto done. It would be much better for the Jamaica proprietor to give liberally now, whilst he has it in his power to give, than wait for a reaction which, if once it takes place, will be terrible in its consequences. He would not hesitate, if he was aware of the effect of a little kindness on the mind of the poor condemned black. Little does he know how deep every act of considerate regard and kindly feeling sinks into his heart, or how it carries with it gratitude and devotion.

“Let him not say, ‘I thank God that I am not a publican and sinner as this man is,’ but let him pour wine and oil into his wounds, and make him his friend.”

On the 22nd of March last, when the subject of Negro Slavery was under the consideration of their Lordships, the noble marquis declared himself in favour of the immediate abolition of the apprenticeship system, and followed up the declaration by remarking that he was not one who did not practice what he preached, but that he would, on the first of August, unconditionally emancipate all the negroes on his estates in Jamaica. The observation produced, as it was well calculated to do, a deep impression on their lordships, and on all who heard it.

very massive appearance, and has a large quantity of dark hair, considering that he is now in his fiftieth year. He has a round flat face, a broad nose, and large marked eye-lashes. His forehead is broad and straight, and his dark eyes are rather deeply set in their sockets. His complexion is very dark, and has what is called a weather-beaten appearance. He makes a point of attending in the house on all important occasions, and is often, indeed, to be seen in his place when nothing of particular interest is expected.

The Marquis of NORTHAMPTON, though sufficiently decided in his Whiggish principles, does not mix himself up with parties to any very great extent, either within the walls of the house or out of doors. He is much more partial to the peaceful pursuit of literary and scientific objects, than to the storms and tempests of party conflicts. There are some men to whose very existence political or some other species of strong excitement is necessary: deprive them of that, and they would pine away and die of what the French call *ennui*, but which we call languor. The noble marquis, on the other hand, would hardly think life worth the possessing, were it only to be purchased by plunging one-self into the troubled sea of political contention. It will not, after this, excite surprise when I say, that the noble marquis is by no means frequent in his attendance in the house. But even were he less fond of literary and scientific pursuits than he is, I could easily account for his absence from parliament from another cause. His country residence, Ashley Castle, in Northamptonshire, is allowed by all who have seen it to be

one of the most beautiful, and in every respect most delightful places in the United Kingdom. Its attractions would be sufficient of themselves to confine one in a great measure to home, who, like his lordship, has no relish for the turmoils of party politics. He is a respectable speaker. I have not heard him address their Lordships at sufficient length to be able to form an opinion as to how he acquits himself in the house; but I remember hearing him a few years ago speak at some length, when presiding at a public meeting in the Thatched Tavern, assembled for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of erecting a statue to the memory of the late Sir John Malcolm. On that occasion he acquitted himself in a very creditable manner. He spoke with considerable ease, though, if my memory does not mislead me, with some deliberation. His articulation is distinct, but his voice wants power and variety. He speaks with considerable animation, but is rather sparing of his gesture. You see at once that he is a literary man, and yet there is no appearance of a wish to parade his literary acquirements.

The noble marquis has contributed various pieces, both in poetry and in prose, to the periodical literature of the day. Most of those pieces, I believe, have appeared in the *Annals*. Some months ago the noble marquis avowedly edited a book, for the benefit of the widow of a deceased author of some celebrity. The work to which I refer, appeared under the title, I think, of "*The Widow's Offering*." I am not aware of any detached work of any extent which has proceeded from his pen.

The noble marquis is no devoted worshipper of the Graces. His toilette never costs him a thought. He dresses with a plainness approaching to a primitive simplicity. He is about the middle height, rather perhaps below it; and of proportionable thickness. His complexion is dark, and his hair black. His features are somewhat large, especially about the eyes and eyebrows. The expression of his countenance is placid and intellectual. His age is forty-eight years; though, judging from appearance only, you would set it down at five or six years more.

The Earl of ROSEBERY has an aversion, which nothing but some powerful consideration can overcome, to take any active part in great national questions; while, on the other hand, he would never forgive himself if he allowed any Scottish subject of interest or moment to be brought before their Lordships without expressing his opinions respecting it. He acquits himself, in his addresses to the house, in a very respectable manner. He speaks with great emphasis, as if every sentence he uttered were the result of deep conviction. The earnestness of his manner always insures him an attentive hearing, and adds much to the effect of what he says. His speeches usually indicate an acquaintance with their subject. His elocution would be considered good, were it not that its effect is impaired by his very peculiar voice—so peculiar that I know not how to describe it. All I can say respecting it is, that a person who has once heard will never forget it. He would recognize it again without seeing the speaker or knowing that it was lordship, in any place or at any distance of

time. The English ear perceives at once that he is a Scotchman; and yet his Scotch accent cannot be said to be of a broad kind. A native of his own country would not very readily recognize the northern accent in the elocution of his lordship. He always speaks with sufficient loudness to be audible in all parts of the house. He seldom falters, and still more rarely hesitates for want of suitable phraseology. His language is in good taste, without being polished. His addresses never extend to any length, but they are comprehensive. There is generally as much matter-of-fact or argument in them as a more wordy speaker would swell out to double the extent.

His action requires but little notice. He is a quiet speaker: his body stands nearly as still as if he were transfixed. He now and then moves both hands at once, just as if he were waving them to some friend he recognized at a distance.

The noble earl is slightly below the middle height, with a moderate inclination to corpulency. His complexion partakes more of sallowness than of any other quality I could name. His hair has something of a grayish colour. In the features of his face there is nothing peculiar. He looks a good-natured man, and I believe is so in reality. He is in his fifty-fifth year. It is a curious circumstance that the word "Rose" occurs in the family name, as well as in his title, the family name being *Primrose*.

The Earl of Gosford is a nobleman whose name has of late been brought before the public with a prominence unequalled, perhaps, by that of any other peer in the

realm. I refer, of course, to its connexion with Canada and Canadian affairs. At the time I write his lordship is daily expected home from Canada, having been recalled by the Melbourne cabinet from the government of that colony. When he re-appears in his place in the House of Lords, some lengthened statements will naturally be expected from him, in reference to his share of the responsibility of the recent insurrection in Canada. Before quitting the house and the country he very seldom addressed their Lordships, and when he did, his wish seemed to be to express his sentiments in the fewest possible words, and in the shortest space of time which was practicable. The little that he said, however, had always the merit of being pertinent to the purpose he had in view. His object could never be mistaken, and his matter was always of such a nature as seemed well calculated to promote that object. He is a slow speaker, but not unpleasantly so. His voice is clear, and his enunciation very distinct. He is a tranquil, unassuming speaker, never raising his voice to a high pitch, nor having recourse to anything deserving the name of gesture. Before he went to Canada, he was one of the most regular attendants in the house. He was punctual as the clock struck five; the Lord Chancellor, indeed, would not have been often wrong, though he had made the noble earl's entrance into the house the signal for taking the woolsack.

In figure Lord Gosford is short and thickset. His complexion is dark, and so is his hair. The chief characteristic of his face is a certain hardness of features, which almost gives it a sternness of expression. He is in his sixty-second year.

CHAPTER VII.

LIBERAL PEERS.

(CONTINUED.)

The Earl of Minto—The Earl of Shrewsbury—The Earl of Lichfield—Lord Lynedoch—Lord Portman.

THE EARL OF MINTO was not much heard of as a public character until he accepted office under the present administration. He succeeded Lord Auckland, as First Lord of the Admiralty, upwards of two years since, when the latter noble lord was appointed Governor General of India. The Earl of Minto did not, however, then enter the public service for the first time; he had been for some years, at a former period, ambassador at the Court of Berlin. His father, the late Earl of Minto was well known through the situations he held in connexion with India. In 1806, he was President of the Board of Control, and was afterwards appointed to the situation of Governor-general of Bengal. As a speaker, the present noble earl has few or no pretensions. Both his matter and his manner are against him. His matter never rises above mediocrity; sometimes it does not quite reach that point; while it is made to appear worse than it really is by his unfavourable manner. His voice is husky, and his elocution is not in good taste. There is an unusual broadness in his pronunciation for one in his rank of life, even though a native of Scotland; and, instead of being lessened, the defects

under which he labours in this respect are greatly aggravated by the slowness of his utterance. He occasionally hesitates, but not to any extent, as if at a loss for the proper phraseology. He is, however, notwithstanding this absence of oratorical qualifications, always listened to with much attention by their Lordships. I ascribe this partly to the respect in which he is personally held, and partly to a straightforwardness and earnestness of manner which cannot fail to strike any one who hears him. Though there is nothing like eloquence in his speeches, he is always clear, and his facts, in which he largely deals, are usually important, and bear on the subject before the house. He has a decided dislike to speaking. It is a positive punishment to him to be obliged to address the House. If he were a Roman Catholic, the priest, aware of his aversion to speak, would impose on him the necessity of making a speech by way of penance. No one ever heard the noble earl volunteer a speech. No one ever heard him make a speech when he could help it. It is only when the duties of his office compel him to say something, that a sentence is known to come from his lips in the house. He is a nobleman, notwithstanding, who is not only well acquainted with the duties of his office, but who possesses a very respectable amount of general information.

In the Earl of Minto's personal appearance there is nothing striking. He is of a spare make, and a little above the general height. His complexion is unusually dark, and his countenance has somewhat of a Jewish expression. His hair is black and abundant. He scarcely looks so old as he is: his age is fifty-six.

The Earl of SHREWSBURY very seldom takes part in the debates in the house, but he is, on the whole, pretty regular in his attendance. A speech of five minutes' duration in the course of a session is the utmost extent to which he troubles their Lordships. The only occasion on which I have heard him speak during the present session was on the 1st of March, on the evening on which the Bishop of Exeter presented a petition complaining of the alleged perjury of the Roman Catholic members of the House of Commons. Being himself a Roman Catholic, he very naturally felt sore at the charges of an utter violation of the first principles of morality, which were preferred against the Roman Catholic members of the Lower House by the bench of Bishops,—thinking, no doubt, that as he had, on questions affecting the church, voted in the same way, the charge was, by implication, also brought against him. He appears to be an exceedingly diffident man. Nothing, at any rate, could be more unassuming than his manner when addressing their Lordships. He is not sufficiently audible in the gallery, and if the least noise prevailed among their Lordships, he could not be heard in the body of the house. He speaks in a timid, plaintive tone, and yet I believe he does not want moral courage. It is difficult to say whether his voice be good or otherwise, in consequence of his never giving it full scope. Judging as well as his inanimate manner would permit; it does not want either clearness or strength. Of gesture the noble earl is exceedingly sparing, if, indeed, he can be said to have any. He just moves his right arm as much as suffices to convince the spectator that

it is capable of motion. In every other respect he stands pretty nearly as steadily as if he were trying how motionless a man may be in an erect position. When speaking, there is a slight tendency in his person to lean forward.

Of the noble earl's matter I need not say much. He has no ambition to be considered a speaker: hence his matter is as plain and unpretending as his manner. There is no appearance of a wish to round a period—no indication that he aims at effect. He never speaks at all except when he conceives that a sort of moral necessity is imposed on him to make some observations; and then, unlike many other peers I could name, instead of labouring to make his speech as long as possible, his object is to say what passes in his mind in the shortest possible space of time. This observation will at once lead the reader to the inference, that Hamlet could not have characterized his speeches as “words, words, words.” There is no verbiage in them. If his ideas are common-place, he gives you one idea, such as it is, in every sentence; and what more, I should like to know, could any man in reason ask?

The noble earl has nothing remarkable in his personal appearance. He is much about the usual height, and correspondingly formed. His face is of the oval form, and has more of the expression of repose than of any other quality in it. It is deficient in energy and decision. His complexion has more colour in it than the countenances of most of his co-legislators in the Upper House. His features have nothing peculiar in them; they are not small, neither can they be considered

large. His hair is of a brown colour, and usually overlaps his forehead. He has a favourite position, as well as a favourite seat, in the house. His seat is on the back bench, immediately behind Lord Brougham; and the position to which he seems most partial is that of sitting with his arms folded on his breast. If he be listening with special attention to the peer who is addressing their Lordships, and if that peer be on the opposition side of the house, you will at once be informed of the fact by his taking an occasional peep at him, by the assistance of his eye-glass. He was admitted into the House of Lords on the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, and is now in the fifty-first year of his age.

The Earl of LICHFIELD very rarely opened his mouth in the house previous to the year 1835: but his appointment to the office of Postmaster-general, soon after the re-accession of Lord Melbourne to power, has since then repeatedly imposed upon him the necessity of addressing their Lordships. The noble earl has an unqualified aversion to public speaking: nothing is a greater punishment to him than to be obliged to make a speech, which of course he occasionally is, when any attacks are made in the house on the administration of the post-office affairs. Nothing is more unpleasant to him than the sound of his own voice in the House of Lords. He would rather submit to the infliction of a two hours' speech from the worst speaker that ever opened his mouth, than make a speech of his own of ten minutes' duration. I am strongly inclined to the notion, that were Mr. Wallace, the member for Greenock,

to be made a peer, and continued in the House of Lords the same vigorous attacks on the post-office system which have characterized that gentleman's legislative career in the other house, the Earl of Lichfield would unhesitatingly resign his office, rather than have the unpleasant duty imposed upon him, night after night, of defending himself, and the establishment of which he is the head, from the charges preferred by the member for Greenock.

When the noble earl is under the necessity of speaking, he labours with all his might and main to make the shortest possible work of it. I need hardly say, after this, that his speeches are always short. I have no recollection of having heard him address their Lordships for a longer period than twelve or fifteen minutes. His matter almost invariably consists of statements and figures. Arguments or reasoning he rarely attempts. He submits to their Lordships certain facts, usually leaving those facts to speak for themselves. His matter is always clear. He expresses himself with sufficient precision, in plain, unpretending language. His utterance is moderately rapid; occasionally he hesitates a little, and now and then has to correct his phraseology. His manner is quiet and unassuming; and he seldom raises his voice beyond the subdued tone in which he commences his speech.

The personal appearance of the noble earl has nothing peculiar about it. He is tall, and rather slenderly made. His complexion is dark, and his hair, of which he has always an ample stock, is black. His whiskers are "prodigiously" large. The form of his face is long

rather than otherwise. His features are not characterized by any particular expression. He is yet but a young man, being only in his forty-third year.

LORD LYNEDOCHE is a nobleman who, though he has not taken any active part in the proceedings of the house for some years past, is nevertheless, on various accounts, deserving of a notice. First of all, he is the father of the peerage. He is in his eighty-eighth year. That his lordship should have lived to this advanced age is the more surprising, when it is recollected what fatigues and hardships he underwent, as an officer in the army, when Sir Thomas Graham. A braver or more distinguished soldier has seldom appeared on the field of battle. His military achievements were of so distinguished a nature for many years prior to the peace of 1815, and are so well known to all acquainted with the history of the late war, as to render any particular reference to them unnecessary. It was in return for his great services as an officer in the army that he was raised to the dignity of a peer of the realm, in addition to a regular vote of thanks from both houses of parliament. It is worthy of observation, that notwithstanding Lord Lynedoch's very great age, he was remarkable until last session for the regularity of his attendance in the house. Night after night he was in his place by five o'clock, with as great a punctuality as if his life or fortune had depended on his presence at that hour. It was an interesting sight to see his lordship coming into the house. There was something singularly venerable in his appearance, apart from the events and circumstances with which his name was associated: with those

associations, it can hardly be necessary to say, that his aspect was rendered doubly venerable. His once tall robust frame had settled down into something of a stooping posture; while his hair was white as the unsunned snow. His face was furrowed with wrinkles, and wanted the blood and colour of less advanced age. His countenance wore an expression of deep thought, blended with calm dignity. When in the prime of life, his figure must have been remarkably commanding and his face very handsome. He rarely spoke for many years past, and even when he did, but seldom at any length. He spoke in a slow and subdued tone, and used very little gesture. I have not seen him in his place in the house in the course of the present session.

LORD PORTMAN has not long been a member of the Upper House. He was raised to the peerage only a few years since. For some time previously, he represented an English county in the House of Commons, where he spoke as Mr. Portman with much greater frequency than he has done since his elevation to the Upper House. Indeed, he can hardly be said to have made a speech in the latter place at all, until the opening of the Victoria Parliament, when he was selected by ministers to second the motion of the Duke of Sussex for an address to her Majesty, thanking her for her gracious speech. On any occasion on which he had before spoken in the house, he chiefly confined himself to a few desultory observations; in most cases, on the presentation of petitions. His speech, therefore, on the occasion of seconding the motion for an address to the throne, may, in one sense, be said to have been his

debut as a speaker in the Upper House; and as might, in the circumstances, have been expected, all eyes were upon him to see how he would acquit himself. He spoke for more than half an hour, and acquitted himself in a highly respectable manner. The matter of his speech without being brilliant, displayed considerable talent. It was occasionally argumentative, sometimes declamatory, always clear. His style was unassuming and plain: he never seemed to aim at being rhetorical. His manner was pleasant rather than impressive. One of his favourite attitudes was to rest both hands on the table for a short time, and then suddenly withdraw them, to enable him to resume a perpendicular position. He usually kept his eye fixed on the two or three noble lords immediately opposite him. He spoke with some fluency, and without any seeming difficulty. His voice is of the treble kind. He did not speak in loud tones, but was sufficiently audible in all parts of the house. He had nothing worthy of the name of gesticulation, beyond his resting himself by means of his two hands on the table, in the way I have described, and a slight occasional movement of the head. He is dark looking, and has black hair. His features are regular, and his countenance wears an intelligent aspect. He is rather tall, and of a stout frame. He is understood to be somewhat reserved in his habits, and is said to have a good deal of the quality which the French call *hauteur*. The noble lord is in the thirty-eighth year of his age.

BOOK II.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

CHAPTER I.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Swearing in the members—Mr. O'Connell taking the oaths—Unpopular speakers—Predilections of particular members for particular subjects—Sleeping in the House—Difference in the appearance of the House at different times—Diversity in the manner of members when addressing the House—The difference in their dress—Anecdote of an Irish member and his hat.

IN the case of the House of Commons, as in that of the House of Lords, many amusing circumstances occurred while the members were being sworn in at the opening of the Victoria Parliament. It was not only amusing but sometimes laughable to see those gentlemen returned for the first time, when about to take the oaths. The members, including old and new, advanced to the table, on several occasions, in companies of from a dozen to a dozen-and-a-half; and anything more awkward than the movements of the newly-fledged legislators it were impossible to imagine. But decidedly the best scene of all was exhibited on Friday, when

upwards of one hundred members were sworn in at once. Some of the new M.P.'s stared at the huge proportions of the Speaker's wig, as if they had been afraid of the article; but what chiefly embarrassed them *was*, to ascertain the position which they ought respectively to occupy at the table. They dashed against each other, displaced each other, and trod on each other's toes; just as if engaged in a regular jostling match. An Irishman would have thought the thing an imitation of a row. At one time, two or three were seen snatching at the same copy of the New Testament; and immediately after, the same two or three legislators were seen holding the book at once with an air of great gravity. The limited supply of the sacred volume—limited, I mean, as compared with the number of gentlemen being sworn in at one time—rendered this necessary. The various moods of mind in which the oaths were evidently taken, afforded in the Lower House, as in the Lords, matter for curious reflection. Those of liberal politics, and of latitudinarian notions respecting denominational differences in religion, clearly regarded, like the Whig peers, those portions of the oath which relate to the Roman Catholic faith as of no deep moment; for they hummed over the words in that careless and impatient manner in which a school-boy repeats an ungrateful task. They often looked, on the sly, off the printed slip whence they read; just as boys of a trifling disposition do at school, when they fancy the eye of the pedagogue is not on them. The Tories, on the other hand, and all who entertained a conscientious horror of the Roman Catholic religion, were remarkably serious and

emphatic when repeating the portions of the oath which apply to it. I think it would have been no difficult matter, without any particular pretensions to a practical knowledge of the system of Lavater, to have distinguished between the more devout of the Tories and the more latitudinarian of the Liberals, from a simple glance at their several countenances while reading the denunciations against certain points in the Roman Catholic faith. The grave visages of the former exhibited a marked contrast to the careless physiognomies of the latter.

The circumstance of so many persons audibly repeating the same words at once, had a singular effect on the auricular organs. Only fancy that you hear upwards of one hundred individuals, all repeating in loud tones the same words after the clerk of the House of Commons,—words, too, which many of them had never pronounced before,—and you will easily conceive what must have been the variety of voices, and the deviation from the proper time in the delivery, which must have been exhibited on the occasion. Anything more inharmonious it has happily been but seldom my lot to listen to. It need not aught of the prophetic spirit, after hearing the voices and elocution of many of the honourable gentlemen, to predict that they were not destined to achieve any remarkable oratorical triumphs on the floor of the House of Commons.

While the large assemblage of members of whom I have been speaking, were undergoing the initiatory process of taking the oaths, a rather awkward circumstance occurred. I refer to the fact, that at the same time

another of the clerks was engaged in administering a different oath to six or seven Roman Catholic members standing at the same table; so that the latter were obliged to submit, without even a word of murmur, far less of remonstrance, to hear themselves denounced by the Protestant members as idolaters, for whom a certain doom, which I shall not here mention, is in sure reserve. This might have been avoided by administering the oath to the Catholics at an after period.

Mr. O'Connell came into the house by himself. His ever-smiling and ample countenance, redolent of health and of a cheerful disposition, delighted all his friends present, as his athletic person was recognised passing the bar, and swaggering up towards the table. It is a positive luxury, in an assemblage where there are so many dandies and sprigs of fashion, to witness the plain farmer-like appearance and unsophisticated manners of Mr. O'Connell. Advancing to the corner of the table, on the ministerial side of the house, next the Speaker's chair, the honourable member intimated to one of the clerks that he was ready to take the oaths. The clerk, having placed the oath of allegiance in his hand, forthwith commenced reading it. Mr. O'Connell not being able to read without the aid of an eye-glass, and not having taken out of his pocket that necessary auxiliary to his vision in time to enable him to start with the clerk, was obliged to repeat the words for some time after the clerk, without knowing whether the latter was reading correctly or not. All this while, the honourable gentleman was making a most active search for his glass, first in one pocket, then in another; when

eventually alighting on it, he promptly raised it to his eyes, and carefully read the remainder of the oath, as he also did the one administered only to Roman Catholics, from the printed copy before him. It was amusing to observe the slow and cautious way in which he repeated the words after the clerk, before he was in a condition to read the oath, contrasted with the rapidity of his utterance when reading it himself off the printed copy. In fact, he had hardly commenced reading the document, when it must have struck all present that, instead of following the clerk, he was rather in advance of him. It looked indeed, as if there had been a regular match between the two, as to who should read the oath most rapidly; while it was beyond all question that Mr. O'Connell was the winner.

While this exhibition of rapid reading rivalry was going on, Mr. O'Connell, instead of taking the document in his hands, as the members usually do when going through the ceremony of being sworn in, laid it on the table, and applying his glass to his eyes with his left hand, thrust the fingers of his right one between his black neckerchief and his neck, at intervals of a few seconds, until he had got to the end of the oaths. Mr. O'Connell read the whole of the oaths in a distinct and audible, though rapid, manner; but was repeatedly observed to lay peculiar emphasis on particular expressions. He laid remarkable stress on that part of the oath of allegiance which refers to the Queen in particular. If any one had doubted the honourable member's loyalty before,—which no one, so far as I am aware, ever did,—they could no longer resist the conviction

that he was not only a loyal subject, but that he was one of the most loyal subjects in her Majesty's dominions.

Having got through the ceremony of swearing in, Mr. O'Connell took up the Roman Catholic oath, and then contemptuously tossed it down again on the table, as if he had either had some private quarrel with it, or deemed it an altogether unnecessary affair. This done, he glanced some half dozen of his own peculiar smiles at some of the honourable members beside him, and then went over to the Speaker, with whom he cordially shook hands, and held a brief confabulation: after which he took his seat for a few seconds, and then waddled out of the house again.

I mentioned in my First Series of this work, that some honourable members have acquired a great reputation—if so it must be called—for the moving effect which they produce on their co-legislators. I do not mean moving as regards the feelings or passions, but as regards the locomotive parts of one's body. Mr. Peter Borthwick* and Mr. Serjeant Lefroy are entitled to the first place in the first rank of this class of members. There are others again, who somehow or other contrive to detain honourable gentlemen in their seats, but who as surely send a large portion of them sound asleep by the time they have been a quarter of an hour on their legs, as if some powerful soporific draught had been administered to them. This may appear a hyperbolic expression; but if I could only get those who

* Mr. Borthwick, as stated in a previous sheet, has been unseated since this was written.

may be sceptical on the subject transferred to the gallery of the House of Commons when such senators are speaking, they would be constrained to acknowledge that there is no exaggeration in the matter. In this case I will not mention names, as that might appear invidious; but I may state, that there are seven or eight gentlemen, on either side of the house, who are proverbial for the lethargic effects which their speeches produce.

It is curious to observe with what interest particular members listen to the speeches of other honourable gentlemen, to which the members generally pay no attention, when the subject chances to be a favourite one with those particular members. If, for example, there be any thing highly imaginative in the speech of an honourable gentleman, Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer is sure, if in the house, to be all attention, however listless all other members may be around him. The philosophy, again, which would either send most other members out of the house, or set them a-talking with their next neighbours, would rivet Mr. Grote to his seat, and secure from him the most attentive hearing. Just mention the word "economy," and you are sure of a most willing auditor on the part of Mr. Hume, however inattentive other M. P.'s may be; but give your speech an arithmetical complexion, and that moment Mr. Hume pricks up his ears, even should he have been dozing before,—as if you were pointing out to him some way in which, without any trouble to himself, his fortune might be doubled.

One very amusing instance of this occurred in Feb-

ruary last, on the night of the second reading of the Poor Law Bill for Ireland. On that occasion Mr. Lucas, the member for Monaghan, a very sensible and exceedingly intelligent man, but a very heavy speaker, had, by a prolix address, sent honourable gentlemen into a state of slumber by the dozen. Mr. Hume himself, though usually among the least sleepy members in the house, was among those who, on this occasion, resigned themselves, seemingly without a struggle, into the arms of Morpheus. Mr. Lucas at length came to what I would call an arithmetical part of his speech, beginning with—"As 6s. 8d. is to 20s., so is," &c. I do not finish the sentence, because it had too much of a rule of three complexion for me to remember it. However, it was just the thing for Mr. Hume; and the very moment the figures were mentioned, that moment the honourable gentleman awoke from his doze, and looked as attentive as if he had given Mr. Lucas a most willing and entire loan of his ears from the commencement. I may here add, that the speech of the honourable member for Monaghan continued for some time to be purely arithmetical. It brought to my recollection my school-boy days—the happiest days, alas! of most men—as vividly as if I had at that instant been in bodily fear of the birch of the pedagogue. Mr. Lucas actually put some of his arguments in the very form in which the Dominie used to put perplexing questions in the rule-of-three: "If," said the honourable gentleman, "so-and-so give so-and-so, what will so-and-so give?" I congratulated myself that I was not, as of old, obliged to answer, or, as we were accustomed to say, "work" the

question." I was sometimes puzzled a quarter of a century ago with such exercises: I know to a certainty I should have been so on this occasion. It is perhaps worthy of observation, that so little do reporters, as well as honourable members, relish speeches which partake of a Cocker character, that on this occasion several of the former—I do not mean those on duty—fell into a sound slumber. And who could blame them, in such circumstances, for following the example so generally set them by honourable members? I have no doubt that the lethargic tendency was so general on the occasion, that not even strangers in the gallery escaped the infection. Other parts of the honourable gentleman's speech—which, by the way, was an able one—were, it is but justice to say, listened to with becoming attention.

The observations I have made respecting the soporific influence which the speech in question had on so many persons,—members, reporters, and strangers,—remind me that I ought to say something of a more general nature, on the subject of the sleepy scenes which are often to be witnessed in the house. There are not only certain subjects which invariably, when introduced, send a greater or less number of honourable gentlemen asleep; but there are about a dozen M. P.'s who, be the subject what it may, are sure to be sent asleep, as soundly as if they were never to wake again, by the time the members before alluded to have been half an hour on their legs. I will not, I repeat, mention the names of those gentlemen who, in the capacity of orators, have acquired this unpleasant sort of celebrity;

but I may here state, that they have the merit of sending certain M. P.'s asleep in the house, when the soporific prescriptions of physicians have completely failed at home. When the orators to whom I refer have risen to speak, many honourable gentlemen who have no ~~desire to be found sleeping at their post of legislative duty, prefer going out of the house until the sleep-producing speaker has put a period to his eloquence.~~

Perhaps I should not be far from the truth if I were to say, that there are others who are gratified when they see the members to whom I allude get up to speak; because they are partial to a sound nap, and consequently would prefer the sleepy speech to one of the most brilliant addresses of Sir Robert Peel or Mr. O'Connell.

I shall not say how many members I have seen asleep at once, when a particular speaker, at a late hour of the night, was inflicting a long harangue on the house; nor shall I even hint at the number I have seen in the intermediate state between sleeping and waking—a state more generally characterized by the phrase of ‘half-asleep half-awake;’ but this I may say, that the number on some occasions has been sufficiently great to bring to my remembrance a well known song, beginning with ‘We’re a’ noddin’—a’ noddin’.”

The aspect of the proceedings in the house is very different at different times of the same sitting. From four to five o'clock there is an uninterrupted series of entrances and exits on the part of honourable members. As they come in, you see a considerable portion of them with large rolls of parchment in their hands or under

their arms. These are petitions to the house. On the night of a subject of paramount interest being to be brought forward for discussion, the number of petitions is unusually large: you see rolls of parchment in scores of hands, or spread out on the knees of honourable members, in order that those honourable members may be able to read the headings of the petitions the moment the time for presenting them arrives. The rustling of parchment between four and five is loud and constant; it is now the more so from the rapidity with which the presentation of one petition succeeds another, in consequence of a late regulation of the house preventing any member from saying anything in support of the prayer of a petition. Until five o'clock, the house is, in other respects, a scene of perfect confusion. Members are to be seen promenading the floor in dozens, and talking in all parts of the house to one another, just as if they were so many merchants on the Royal Exchange, or some other place of business. After five o'clock the more important business of the day begins, and then the house has a more orderly appearance. When a speaker of influence is on his legs, nothing can be more decorous than the conduct of honourable members. The most perfect quiet reigns in the place. You would fancy honourable members were all ears, and that they were incapable of anything but listening with the closest attention.

The influential and accomplished orator resumes his seat, and is succeeded by Mr. Fielden, Mr. Serjeant Lefroy, or some other gentleman of the same oratorical calibre. And what follows? There is such a rush of

members towards the door, that you would fancy they had been simultaneously seized with an apprehension that the house was on the eve of falling about their ears. "Oh, the house is up!" is a general exclamation on such occasions among strangers in the gallery, who know no better. In a few minutes the place has an altogether different appearance. The benches which were crowded while the preceding speaker was addressing the house, are now all but entirely deserted. You see an isolated member here and there, who remains because there is no other place to which it suits his convenience to go at the time. You cannot help pitying the unfortunate Speaker, who is doomed to continue in his seat, and is obliged, for politeness sake, to listen, with an appearance of the greatest attention, to the prolix and prosy harangue of the gentleman who plays the orator. The Speaker is perhaps the only member present who is paying, or seeming to pay, the slightest attention to the speech which is in the course of delivery. The frequent yawning, the sleepy aspect, and the general listless appearance of the few besides himself that remain, sufficiently prove that the orator might just as well address his eloquence to the benches on which the members sit.

By-and-by, when some popular speaker is expected to address the house, the place begins to fill again. Very possibly, before a division takes place on the question before the house, some unpopular member may start to his feet, and succeed in catching the eye of the Speaker. It is ten to one, in such a case, if there be not what is called a scene. If you never saw an imita-

tion of a bear-garden exhibition, you may prepare for witnessing it now. Very probably the reader has been in Wombwell's or some other menagerie. If so, I will answer for it that he will hear sounds in St. Stephen's that he never heard, either when present at those zoological exhibitions or anywhere else. Everything has an end: so have scenes in the house of Commons.

The unpopular speaker is succeeded by some favourite one who is expected to finish the debate; in which case the most perfect order is restored; and you are only at a loss to comprehend how a body of men that can demean themselves with so much propriety now, and can so well sustain the deliberative character, should have conducted themselves so differently but ten or twelve minutes before. The debate is finished, and the Speaker, to the utter amazement of the spectators in the gallery, vociferates as loudly as his lungs will permit, "Strangers must withdraw—strangers *must* withdraw." The poor good-natured "strangers," some of them fancying one thing and some another, as the cause of their being ordered out, are fain to make their exit with all practicable expedition, lest possibly they should fall into the clutches of some of the officers of the house, for disobedience to the authority of the Speaker. The members also quit the house and repair to the voting room; so that, within a few minutes of the conclusion of the speech of the member who last spoke, the place is as utterly deserted as if there never had been a human being in it.

The members divide in the voting room, and return to the house to announce the numbers. This done,

there is another rush of members to the door, on their way to their homes, or to the clubs, or to such other places as may best suit their respective pursuits. Thirty or forty perhaps remain to go through what are called the orders of the day, which seldom occupy more than fifteen or twenty minutes; when the words, "That this house do now adjourn!"—words so grateful to his own ears, as well as to the ears of the reporters, are put by the Speaker; and no one hinting anything to the contrary, the House does adjourn.

The sketch I have just given of the various aspects which the House of Commons assumes in the course of one evening, principally applies to nights in which one important subject is chiefly under discussion. On other occasions there is less of variety, and less of striking interest.

It is sometimes amusing to observe the odd temporary associations which take place, through accidental circumstances, between honourable members in the house. To some of these, of a political kind, I referred in my First Series of "Random Recollections" of the Lower House. Not less amusing is it to see the contrast which is sometimes presented, in the personal appearance of a particular pair of members who sit next to each other. The one is a very Falstaff in his bodily proportions; the other is a walking skeleton, a modern bare-bones. An American would compare him to a tong. The most striking contrast of the kind which I ever witnessed in the house, was when Mr. Pattison, the late governor of the Bank of England, and Mr. Roebuck, chanced to sit together. Mr. Pattison is one of

the most corpulent men one will meet with in the course of a moderate lifetime; Mr. Roebuck is so slender and so short, as to resemble an overgrown boy just entered into his teens.

Those in the habit of attending the house can generally tell beforehand whether particular members mean to speak on particular nights. This is in some instances known by their quitting their usual places, and singling out some prominent one, in order that they may appear, as they suppose, to greater advantage. Others, again, when they mean to speak, adjust their hair with special taste, or dress with more than their wonted smartness. Among the latter class of honourable gentlemen was Mr. Peter Borthwick. He was one of the most sprucely attired members in the house, on ordinary occasions; but he always made his dandyism complete by sporting a pair of white gloves on his hands, no matter what may have been the temperature of the house, when he meditated a set speech.

Every one who has been in the house must have been struck with the great change which takes place in the manner of different members, the very moment they commence their addresses. Some honourable gentlemen rise with an air of mock majesty, and begin their speeches in slow and measured tones; others "take to their feet," and commence with an air of great carelessness; while a third class of members literally start from their seats, and bawl out "Mr. Speaker!" as if the thing were with them a matter of life and death. The most distinguished among the latter class is Mr. G. F. Young,

the member for Teignmouth.* He always rises with as much precipitation as if the house were on fire, and the first word he utters has all the effect of an explosion. I recollect hearing some one compare his manner in rising to the bursting of a bottle of soda-water.

In the external appearance, or, as a tailor would call it, the "decoration" of the persons of honourable members, there is a very marked variety. While many of the M. P.'s are so foppishly dressed that even Beau Brummell himself would have looked on their attire with envious eye, there are others who run to the other extreme, and always appear in the most homely apparel. A day labourer in his holiday clothes would look comparatively smart if placed beside them. Taken as a body, though there are many striking exceptions, the Irish Liberal members pay least attention to the cut, quality and condition of their clothes. It would be invidious to say that the want of means is in any case the cause, and that it is their poverty and not their will that consents. With some—and Mr. Shiel is an instance in point—it is a decided dislike to any thing which could be construed into dandyism, that causes what may be called carelessness as to the appearance of their apparel.

In the course of last session, the dress of some of the Irish Liberal members led to one of the most amusing incidents which have occurred for some time in connexion with parliamentary matters. I shall narrate it as briefly as I can. A letter dated from the Irish office, and having the name of Lord Morpeth appended to it,

* Since this was written, Mr. Young has been unseated, on the petition against his return, of his opponent at the last election.

was received by an Irish member, who has long been noted for having his head encircled by a "shocking bad hat." The letter set out by acknowledging, with great gratitude, both on the part of Lord Morpeth himself and his colleagues in office, the distinguished honour and undoubted advantage which Lord Melbourne's administration had derived from the cordial and uniform support which it had received from the Irish members. At the same time it was impossible to shut their eyes, or rather their ears, to the fact, that in regard to dress, the Irish members as a body were not always all that could be wished; a circumstance of which the Conservatives, who were very particular and very tasteful in the article of apparel, took special care to turn to the worst possible account against the Liberal party. The letter proceeded to observe, that while it was to his Majesty's ministers, and to the writer individually as an humble member of the Cabinet, a most gratifying fact that the Liberal party were fully equal to the Conservatives in point of moral character, intellectual acquirements, and parliamentary ability, it was not to be denied that it was extremely desirable that they should, if possible, present at the same time as respectable a personal appearance. Under these circumstances, it was hoped that the gentleman to whom the letter was addressed would not take it amiss if it was hinted by the Irish Secretary (Lord Morpeth) that he should pay a little more attention to his personal appearance, and, above all, to discard the "shocking bad hat" which he had worn for some time, and grace his head by one of a more becoming character.

The honourable member for ———, having read the letter with attention, took up his chapeau, which chanced to be at the time lying on the table beside him; he turned it over and over, and carefully inspected it in all its parts. There was no denying that it was the worse for the wear. There were sundry bruises in the crown; the brim was cracked in various parts; the pile was worn bare in several places; and its aspect altogether was that of an article which had, through the tear and wear it had undergone, assumed a whity-brown complexion. The honourable gentleman's first impulse was to dash it on the floor, and to trample it into a shape which it never assumed in the hands of its manufacturer. In plain terms, his determination in the heat of the moment was, to make it serve the purpose of a temporary mat for his feet, and thus preclude the possibility of its ever again disgracing either his head, or the head of anybody else. But the thought flashed on his mind, just in time to save the devoted hat from instant destruction, that it was the only article of the kind he had in his possession, and that it would be necessary to wear it until he should reach the hatter's shop where he intended to procure a substitute. To a fashionable hatter accordingly Mr. ——— forthwith went,—fancying all the way, now that his attention had been specially called to it by a letter from the Irish office, that every person he met was staring with surprise at the faded appearance of his chapeau. The hatter's he eventually reached, and soon fitted himself with one of the most elegant and fashionable articles which the emporium could produce.

Scarcely had the new hat been adjusted on his head, and the honourable gentleman had looked in the glass and been satisfied that he looked sufficiently smart, than he started for the Irish Office.

"Is Lord Morpeth within?" was his inquiry of one of the servants, as he presented himself at the door.

"He is, Sir."

"And disengaged?"

"I believe he is, Sir; but I'll see presently."

The servant rushed into Lord Morpeth's presence, and returned, informing Mr. ——— that his lordship was quite at leisure.

"Ah! how do you do?" the honourable gentleman exclaimed, as he entered, at the same time presenting his hand to the Irish Secretary.

"How are you?" responded his lordship, receiving with much cordiality the extended hand of his parliamentary supporter. "Pray take a seat, Mr. ———."

A few common-place observations were exchanged between the parties, during which the honourable member kept alternately twirling about his hat, and smoothing down the pile with the cuff of his coat. His lordship still taking no notice of the new chapeau, Mr. ——— lost all patience, and broke out into a regular Irish question—"Pray, Lord Morpeth, what do you think of my hat?"

His lordship was a good deal confounded by the nature of the question, but, wishing to be polite, replied, casting a momentary glance at the article, that he thought it was a very good hat.

"Why, I have just paid eight-and-twenty shillings for it," observed the Irish member.

"Oh, indeed—that was the price,—was it?" remarked his lordship carelessly.

"And I have bought it from one of the most fashionable hat-makers at the West-end," added the honourable gentleman.

The noble lord looked still more surprised at his Liberal supporter, but managed to murmur out an "Oh, you did, did you?" without anything marked in his tone.

"What do you think of its shape?" inquired Mr. ———, almost thrusting the hat into his lordship's face, that he might the more closely inspect it.

"Oh, I think it's very good," was the answer, delivered in a way which showed that the Irish Secretary's astonishment was still on the increase.

"How do you like the brim?" inquired the honourable member for ———, again holding up the hat to the gaze of his lordship.

"Oh, I think the hat is unexceptionable in every respect," answered the latter, looking the honourable gentleman in the face with an expression of infinite amazement, instead of again inspecting the hat.

"I'm *so* glad you like it," observed Mr. ——— with much emphasis, and in a tone of marked gratification.

Lord Morpeth's silence was understood by the honourable gentleman to signify his concurrence in the proposition.

"And you don't think the brim too broad?" said the Irish member, after a momentary pause.

Lord Morpeth by this time had become so utterly confounded, that he uttered not a word in reply to the latter observation.

"I was duly honoured with your note, and you see how prompt I have been in complying with your request."

"Really," answered the noble lord, raising his eyes from a document which was laying before him, and gazing on the Irish M. P. with an expression of countenance equally indicative of surprise and indignation—"really Mr. ———, I don't understand all this. Pray, may I beg an explanation. I have sent you no note, nor made any request."

"Well, come now, but I *do* hold that to be decidedly good," remarked the honourable gentleman, affecting a little jocularity.

"Really Mr. ———," said the noble lord, in yet more decided tones, "this *does* require an explanation. Do you mean to ——"

His lordship was prevented finishing his observation by the honourable gentleman taking out of his pocket a letter, which he thrust into the noble lord's hands, observing—"See, look at that."

Lord Morpeth looked at the epistle, and slightly coloured. After a momentary pause, he observed—"Mr. ———, this, I assure you, is not my writing."

"Oh, come, come, Lord Morpeth," said the other smiling, thinking his lordship was in joke.

"I assure you, upon my honour, it is not," repeated his lordship, with great emphasis.

"Not your hand writing!" said the honourable gentleman in faltering accents, and looking singularly foolish, as the idea flashed across his mind that *some wag* had hoaxed him.

"It is not," reiterated Lord Morpeth; "some of your friends have been enjoying their joke at your expense."

"Why, I don't altogether like such jokes," stammered the other, quite crest-fallen and leaving the Irish office immediately, vowing retribution on the party, should he ever discover him, whose waggery had placed him in such ridiculous circumstances.

Who the wag was, has not been yet discovered, and there is every probability that he will be as careful to preserve his secret as if he were a second Junius.

CHAPTER II.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

(CONTINUED.)

The changes which come over the spirit of Members—Instances given—Reluctance of former Members and of Peers to appear in the House—Contrast between the conduct of certain Members when in the House, with their professions on the hustings—Personal disputes between two or more honourable gentlemen—New members in the Victoria Parliament.

ANY one who has, like myself, been in the nightly practice of attending the House of Commons for some years past, must be greatly struck with the changes which, in the course of two or three sessions, come over the legislative spirit of some honourable members. There are some who a few years since were remarkable for the regularity of their attendance in the house, who are now very rarely to be seen within its walls. It

were an invidious task to name individuals to whom this observation applies: that would be done with a better grace in those daily or weekly journals which identify themselves with party politics: in this work, as elsewhere observed, my desire is to steer clear of anything indicative of political partialities or prejudices. There are others, again, who, a few sessions ago, were never to be seen except on great party discussions, in their places in the House of Commons, who are now remarkable for the regularity of their attendance. Foremost among these stands Sir Francis Burdett. I am sure I am within bounds when I say, that, for the three sessions preceding the present, the ex-member for Westminster was not half-a-dozen times in the house each session; whereas he is now to be seen in his place almost every night. Whatever ground of complaint the Westminster electors may have had for the last few years the honourable baronet represented them, on the score of his attendance on his parliamentary duties, the constituency of North Wiltshire have none. And not only does Sir Francis, night after night, take his seat in the house, but he is by no means a niggard of his speeches. He has repeatedly spoken at some length in the course of the present session, though for several years past the sound of his voice was not, in a single instance, heard within its walls. And here let me observe, that the honourable baronet seems to have renewed his physical youth, as well as to have recovered a portion of his former political zeal, though it now takes a different direction. Sir Francis has now all the appearance, as regards the flow of his spirits and

the agility of his movements, of one in his thirtieth year; though he has seen more than twice that number of summer's suns. He walks with a firm and quick step, and is as erect in person as any of the posts in the house. He dresses, too, with all his wonted taste. The eccentric Lady Stanhope, now living among the Turks, and conforming to their opinions, customs, and habits, said, about a quarter of a century ago, that she considered Sir Francis Burdett, in the matter of his dress, to be the beau ideal of an English gentleman. She would express the same opinion, were she to see him now. In the morning he is arrayed in a handsome blue coat, with white waistcoat, light unmentionables, and top boots; all so excellent a fit, that no one, fastidious in matters of the toilet, could be any time in his company without wishing to know who are his "decorators." In the evening he usually appears in a black suit and low shoes; and, as he promenades the floor of the house, he looks as spruce and sprightly as a Regent-street dandy.

I have been often struck with the fact, that so very few of those who have once been members of the house, but have been defeated in their efforts to be returned a second or third time, are to be seen in the seats under the gallery, in the character of spectators. The reason probably is, that they do not like to appear in a place as strangers, where they were formerly "at home." Mr. Horace Twiss and Mr. Roebuck are the only two exceptions which have come under my observation in the course of the present session.

The night on which I saw Mr. Roebuck there, was

that on which Mr. Grote presented his petition to be heard at the bar on behalf of the Canadians; and he appeared under very singular circumstances. The previous discussions had been so exceedingly destitute of interest, as to produce a "moving" effect on *all* the gentlemen, Mr. Roebuck excepted, who in an earlier part of the evening had been present; a circumstance, I may remark, which I never knew to occur before. There sat the ex-member for Bath, as if he had been a second Alexander Selkirk in some solitary isle, with his little person wrapped up as closely in his cloak as if, instead of breathing the warm atmosphere of the House of Commons, he had been exposed to the rigours of a Canadian winter.

The peers have also a dislike to appear in the House of Commons. There they are on precisely the same level as the poorest ten-pound voter in the country, who has been fortunate enough to get his representative to procure him an admission. There must be something peculiarly interesting in the proceedings of the Commons, in order to overcome a peer's reluctance to be placed on even a temporary equality with the promiscuous assemblage below the gallery. The greatest attendance of peers I ever saw in the House of Commons, was on the night which had been fixed by Sir Robert Peel for making an important amendment on the Canada Bill, relative to the powers of Lord Durham as governor of that colony. What induced this unusual attendance of peers, was the general impression that Lord John Russell would find himself between the horns of a dilemma on the occasion. It was fully believed,

and there was every ground for the conviction, that Lord John must, in the name of government, either adopt the amendment of Sir Robert, though he had declared on the previous evening that he would not adopt it, or submit to be left in a minority. The ministry, in other words, were understood to be in a state of greater difficulty and peril than they had ever been before, and therefore the peers mustered strong on the occasion. There were at least eight or ten Tory peers on two seats on the left-hand side of the passage. Among these were the Earl of Aberdeen, Lord Wharncliffe, Lord Ellenborough, and, if I remember rightly, Lord Ashburton. How many there may have been altogether, is more than I can say. Most marked and manifest was the gratification of the noble lords I have just mentioned, when Sir Robert Peel was applying the lash with such unsparing rigour and effect to the political person of Lord John Russell.

It is amusing to contrast the conduct of a very large proportion of the members of the House of Commons, after they have been returned to parliament, with their professions and protestations on the hustings, or in the preliminary matter of canvassing the electors, cap in hand. When prosecuting their canvass, or when haranguing the electors from the hustings, they are so earnest and incessant in their promises of giving the strictest attention to their parliamentary duties," and of opposing this particular measure, and supporting the other, that the poor simple people who have not learned to distinguish between political promises and performance, are often deluded into the belief that their repre-

representatives will be so assiduous and conscientious in the discharge of their parliamentary duties, that there is reason to fear they will fall martyrs to their ardent devotion to the cause of their country and constituents. The observation of several years having taught me to view matters differently, I have, at some recent elections, been at a loss to know whether I ought most to admire the cool effrontery of the candidates making these loud professions of the wonders they are to do in the house, or to pity the unsuspecting electors, who, in the simplicity of their souls, give them credit for such self-denying and devoted patriotism. How many scores of instances could I point out, in which there has been this unbounded prodigality of promise, while there has been scarcely any performance at all! I know numerous honourable gentlemen, on both sides of the house, whose professed patriotism, previous to their election, was so great, that people who knew no better must have imagined it was with them a consuming passion; yet these very men, except on some important party questions, are rarely to be seen in the house. Let the fewness of the number present—even when the subject before the house is one of the utmost moment to the country and mankind, but does not happen to be a party one,—as that number is indicated by any division which chances to take place, answer this question

There are others, again, who were all promise and protestation in their canvass and on the hustings, who are tolerably regular in their attendance in the house, in so far as concerns their personal presence, but who, for all practical purposes, might just as well be anywhere else. They not only never open their mouths to

suggest anything in the shape of an improvement of any measure which is under consideration, but they are as listless and inattentive to everything that is going forward, as if they were so many statues. Persons of this class are sometimes to be seen as fast asleep in their seats, as if they had not been in bed for the previous half-dozen nights. Others are as busy talking to their next neighbours, as if the great duty of the members were to assemble in the House of Commons for the purpose of spending a few hours in the veriest and most puerile gossip. A goodly number of the same class spend a very considerable portion of their legislative existence in the side galleries of the house, stretched out on the seats at full length, and enjoying their slumbers as soundly as if they were reposing on a bed of down. I have sometimes felt uneasy lest some of the more bustling members should, in their transit from one part of the gallery to the other, be so inconsiderate or so unpolite, as unnecessarily to disturb their lethargic fellow legislators. You would positively fancy that some of these sleepy M.P's. never enjoy the luxury of a bed at home. Last session there was an Irish member who was seen, night after night, to take his nap in the gallery, as regularly and seemingly with as much comfort to himself, as if he had been reposing on his bed.

Lord Glenelg is much twitted about his somnolent propensities. I must do his lordship the justice to say, that however much he may resign himself to the embraces of Morpheus at home, I have never seen him even nodding, far less sound asleep, in his place in parliament. If his lordship be as lethargic, as is generally

reported, at home, then all I shall say is, that there is no lack of Lord Glenelgs in the House of Commons. And yet these sleepy legislators were not only all bustle and activity in their canvass, but on the hustings were loud in their protestations of the most vigilant patriotism and the most devoted attention to their parliamentary duties of every kind, and under all circumstances,—should they “have the honour of being the object of the electors’ choice.”

Cobbett, who never lost an opportunity of saying something at the expense of those clergymen who make a profession of religion only for the purpose of promoting their secular views, used to say, that he wondered how two such clergymen could pass each other in the street without laughing. Cobbett meant that it must have been difficult to pass each other without laughing at the credulity of the people in being deceived by them. I have often wondered, when I have seen two honourable members who had been sleeping close to each other, awake from their slumbers about the same time,—how they could look one another in the face without a hearty laugh at the delusion under which their constituents laboured, when they returned them under the conviction that they were to be most indefatigable and exemplary in the discharge of their parliamentary duties.

Many are the kinds of farce which are performed every session, in the Commons’ House of Parliament; but I know of no such exhibition more calculated to excite a feeling of disrespect—not to use a stronger term—for the representative body, than the personal

squabbles of a hostile character which so repeatedly occur between two members. One makes a severe remark on some political opponent; the latter repels the insinuation, or resents the alleged affront, by some still stronger and more pointed personal observation. Cries of "Order, order!" "Chair, chair!" follow from all parts of the side of the house opposite to that whence the strong language proceeded. The party at whom it was levelled starts up with great warmth, and applies to his antagonist in the quarrel, one or more epithets of so very offensive a nature, that the other must either take notice of the circumstance by a hint that a hostile message will be sent to the party making use of the epithets, or submit to the imputation of being regarded as a coward by the M. P.'s of both sides of the house. The former course, that, namely, of assuming a hostile aspect, is invariably resorted to, except in the very few cases in which honourable members have publicly declared that in no circumstances will they fight a duel. It is resorted to the more readily, inasmuch as both parties are perfectly sure that no powder-and-shot affair will take place,—the Speaker in such cases uniformly interposing the shield of his official power to prevent any catastrophe. The hostile defiance, or the hostile threat, is however received with deafening appeals to the "Chair," and cries of "Order, order!" which are enough to frighten persons, unaccustomed to such scenes, out of their wits. Other honourable members get up, sometimes in half-dozens at once, and address poor Mr. Speaker, with great vehemence of manner, insisting that not only have the parties made use of im-

proper language to each other, but that they have conducted themselves in a most unparliamentary manner, and with great disrespect to the House.

These appeals to the Speaker usually terminate with the expression of a hope that the parties will individually withdraw their offensive language. Mr. Speaker, like a man of sense, and knowing with an absolute certainty that the whole affair will end in smoke—though not in the smoke of a pistol—takes it all quite coolly. He does not suffer his equanimity to be disturbed, either by the hostile words or the threatening manner of the parties.

In the mean time, some other member—or it may be three or four at a time—gets up and insists that one of the parties was the aggressor, and that consequently he ought to be made to retract the improper terms first. Before the honourable gentleman who makes this observation has completed his sentence, another leaps to his feet, and vociferates an entirely different view of the matter. It was the other party who was the aggressor, and therefore he ought to retract and apologise to the House first.

While all this is going on, some five or six of the honourable gentlemen nearest to each of the belligerents are beseeching them, by every possible consideration, to rise and assure the Speaker and the House that no more notice will be taken of the matter. The parties refuse, with a dogged obstinacy, to do anything of the kind. They look very consequential, or mighty big, as Mr. O'Connell would say; they feel they are the observed of all observers, and that even the great busi-

ness of the nation has for a time given way to the interest which is taken in their personal squabbles. They consequently look on the matter as an era in their history: they think of the space which they will next day fill in the public eye, as they do at that time in the eye of the House; and therefore very naturally endeavour to keep up the scene as long as they can. They not only pertinaciously refuse to listen to the solicitations of those around them to let the matter drop, but you would fancy, from the cavalier manner they have assumed, that nothing on earth will satisfy them, but either sending a bullet through their adversary, or receiving that particular favour at his hands.

The uproar and confusion continue all this while to increase in the house. Members rise in dozens, and each takes his own view of the matter. Anything more discordant than the sounds which now assail one's ears, it were impossible to imagine. The confusion of tongues which prevailed at Babel, could have been nothing to the confusion, which in such cases, obtains in the House of Commons—a place which is supposed to be pre-eminently remarkable for the deliberative and orderly character of its proceedings.

Eventually the noise partially dies away. Fewer members speak at once; and the cries of "Chair, chair!" "Order, order!" are neither so numerous nor of so stentorian a character. Then something is heard to drop from honourable gentlemen, about the disrespect offered to the House by the militant parties. One of them starts up that moment to his feet to disclaim all intention of having, either by what he has said or done,

meant the slightest disrespect to the House, and to assure the Speaker that he is most willing to bow with submission to whatever view he takes of the matter. The other follows the example, and also throws himself unreservedly into the hands of the Speaker, who desires both to withdraw the offensive expressions. Both make a further show of valour, by again disclaiming any disrespect to the House, and apologising for having said or done anything which could have been so construed. They have scarcely uttered the words, when up leaps some honourable member to his feet, and protests against the House receiving the disclaimer, on the ground of its not containing a pledge that no further steps will be taken in reference to the personal part of the matter. Both parties are again requested to give that pledge, but they are deaf to all entreaties. They are much too valorous for that. At length the Speaker interposes. He talks about having to perform a painful duty, and gives certain pretty broad hints about a personage known by the name of the Serjeant-at-Arms, whose services will become necessary, should the militants not at once cease hostilities, and promise that nothing further will be done in the business. They both, with much seeming reluctance, give the required promise; their anxiety to keep up their assumed valour to the last requiring that the pledge should not be voluntarily given. The matter thus ends, after, very possibly, having occupied the attention of the House, to the interruption of most important business, for an hour or an hour and a half.

A greater farce, I repeat, than that which is exhibited

on the occasion of personal squabbles in the house, was never enacted, either there or in any other place. One is at a loss to know whether most to smile at the swagger, the airs, and the obstinacy of the parties, or the intense anxiety which is displayed by so many honourable members, to prevent, as is assumed for the moment, any fatal results from the quarrel.

Everybody who reflects for a moment on the subject, knows that the Speaker will eventually interfere, and exact a pledge from each of the parties not to take any further notice of the matter; and it is, as before remarked, the knowledge of this that causes the belligerents to assume so valorous an attitude. But for this knowledge of the interposition of the Speaker, they would soon show that, like Falstaff, they considered discretion to be the better part of valour. A duel resulting from these squabbles on the floor of the House of Commons, is a matter of very rare occurrence. I have generally observed, too, that those who parade their pretended valour in this way, are men who are the reverse of notorious for their fire-eating propensities. If they were in earnest in their affected wish to fight a duel with each other, why do they not quit the house when the offensive observations are made, and before the quarrel has reached a crisis which imposes on the Speaker the necessity—he being obliged to assume that he apprehends a breach of the peace—of interfering. The valour of such gentlemen will, in the great majority of cases, be found to be such as characterised the fat knight whose name I have already mentioned.

The number of new members in the Victoria Parlia-

ment is unusually great, it is no less than one hundred and fifty-eight, being nearly a fourth part of the whole. The appearance of so many strange faces in the house had a curious effect on the old members, during the first few days of the session. It awakened in the minds of those of them accustomed to meditation, a train of interesting reflections. They thought of the varied circumstances by which their absence from the new house was to be accounted for. Some were excluded by ruined fortunes; some, because they had quitted the country; some, because of their apostasy from the principles they had formerly professed, and on the faith of which they had been returned; others, from the fickleness of popular favour; and a fifth class, because they are now in their graves.

The contemplative mind had only to follow out this train of reflection, by recollecting particular individuals who belonged to each of these five classes. On some occasions, old members seemed as if in a strange place; for on particular nights the new members, impelled, by the novelty of the situation in which they were placed, to be marvellously punctual in their attendance, whether the business to be transacted was important or not, far outnumbered the old stagers. The side galleries were, for the first three weeks of the session, nightly crowded by the newly-imported M.P.'s. And here I may remark, that new members have a particular partiality to the side galleries. By taking up their position in them, they are enabled to look down on the more experienced M.P.'s, and, by carefully observing their movements, become acquainted with the forms and proceedings of the house.

The awkwardness of new members, for the first few weeks of the session, can only be conceived by those who have witnessed it. Not only are they, with the exceptions furnished in the case of some two or three self-confident or adventurous spirits, afraid to utter even one brief sentence on any subject which is under discussion, but they do not even know how to deport themselves as regards their moving from one place to another. The knowledge necessary for this, however, they soon acquire, by lounging about in the side galleries. Hence, in addition to the motive to frequent these galleries, afforded by their anxiety to learn the forms and proceedings of the house as regards speaking, they have a desire to avoid laughter at their own expense, because of any awkward physical movement.

I do not recollect ever to have seen so many young members in the House of Commons as there are at present. Some of them have all the appearance of mere youths, who, one would suppose, ought to be still under the strict guardianship of their tutors. How they came to be chosen as the representatives of constituencies, does, indeed, seem passing strange. The idea of such youths having, to a certain extent, the destinies of a great country committed to their care, is something more than odd. There may be men of mature judgment among them; but their appearance is not calculated to inspire confidence in the wisdom of their deliberations.

Among the new members returned to the Victoria Parliament, there are a great many whose manner, both in the house and out of the house, is the most undeliberative-like that the human mind could fancy. In the

house, you see them either talking to or laughing with each other—very often both together; or if not, they are to be seen standing in dozens about the bar, completely blocking up the passage, so as to deny other honourable gentlemen all egress and ingress. To sit in silence, and to listen with attention to what is going on, is a habit which in most cases they have yet to acquire. Then, again, to see them leaving the house, smoking their cigars, and making a loud noise as they proceed up Parliament Street, you would suppose them to be so many sparks bent on what, in homely language, is called a spree. I could not help contrasting in my own mind the levity of demeanour exhibited by several of the young members on their way up Parliament Street, on one of the nights of the debate on the Spottiswoode combination, with the staid manner in which Mr. Hume, Mr. Warburton, Mr. Wallace, and others of the older members, proceeded homewards. But this is a delicate topic, and therefore I will say no more on it.

It is amusing to contrast the appearance and manner of new members immediately on their introduction into the house, with their appearance and manner after they have been a short time in it. At first they look as strange as if they had been suddenly transplanted to another sphere. They generally, as already observed, lounge about the side galleries; and when obliged to be in the body of the house, they seem as timid as if they were treading on forbidden ground. The awkwardness of deportment in all their movements is exceedingly amusing to the older members. What above all things

astonishes the new members, is the loud cheering with which popular speakers are greeted. They are amazed to hear "the first assembly of gentlemen in Europe" signifying their approbation of particular sentiments by lustily exclaiming, "Hear, hear, hear!" In a few weeks, however, they usually acquire sufficient confidence, and feel sufficiently at home, to vie in this respect with the most practised hands in the house.

I was particularly struck, at the commencement of the present session, with the marked surprise with which, during the few first night's discussions, they heard the loud plaudits which followed particular passages in the speeches of the more popular speakers. But before one little fortnight had passed away, they themselves were so largely infected with the mania for vociferously applauding the crack speakers, as to far surpass their senior brethren of St. Stephen's. The custom of honourable gentlemen is to content themselves with showing their approbation of a speech by shouts of "Hear, hear, hear!" But the new M. P.'s, in many instances, improved upon their practice, and literally greeted particular passages of favourite speakers with "hurrahs," at the full stretch of their voice. Several of the old members were much amused by the vigour with which one of these new-made legislators cheered particular passages in Lord Stanley's speech, on the second night of the discussion on the Irish Election Petition Fund. He stationed himself in the side gallery, on the left hand of the reporters, nearly opposite the Speaker's chair. Wishing to enjoy his ease and the eloquence of the noble lord at the same time, the new

M. P., who was a little man, with a brown coat, and a dark country-looking face, stretched himself on one of the benches in a horizontal position. One who knew no better would, in the first instance, have fancied that he was enjoying a sound nap. Nothing of the kind; as his lusty cheering of the more effective passages in his lordship's speech conclusively proved. Whenever about to express his approbation, he raised up his head so as to attain a slanting posture; and then making the most wry mouth I ever witnessed, shouted out, as if hailing some friend a quarter of a mile distant, "Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!—ah—ah—ah!" The word was drawled out the third time to as great a length as his breath would permit. The lusty applauder of Lord Stanley's eloquence then lay down again, as if about to address himself to sleep, and again started up and vociferated in the same way whenever any other passage struck his fancy, until the noble lord resumed his seat. Mr. Law, the Recorder for London, and Mr. Pemberton, the celebrated Chancery barrister, were among the honourable members whom I observed nearest to this newly chosen M. P., and heartily and repeatedly did they laugh at his singular conduct.

In connexion with the number of new members who are returned to every new parliament, it is worthy of observation, that the Speaker is often for some time at a loss to know their names, when they chance to rise for the purpose of addressing the House. This is not to be wondered at. It is only surprising how soon he makes himself sufficiently acquainted with six hundred and fifty-eight men, so as at once to know and

audibly announce the name of whatever member rises to speak. Xerxes is said to have had so excellent a memory that he knew every soldier in his army by name, though that army consisted of a hundred thousand men. I am not aware that any Speaker of the House of Commons, of the past or present times, could boast of so great a memory as this; but, without a memory of more than the average retentiveness, the duties of the speakership could never be efficiently performed.

There has been no parliament for a great many years, in which there were so few eccentric members as there are in the present. Mr. Richard Martin, Mr. John Fuller, or Jack Fuller, as he himself preferred being called; Colonel Wilson, formerly M. P. for York; Sir Charles Wetherell, and Mr. Kearsley, are all gone. The three former have been dead for some years; the Liberal illiberality of the "ten-pounders" has shut the door of the House of Commons against the two latter. The three gentlemen first named were at one time members of parliament, and rich were the exhibitions which, night after night, were to be witnessed in the House of St. Stephen's, either in their persons, or which were got up through their instrumentality. They were a trio of most singular men, but were all, I believe, decidedly honest and well intentioned. The older members of the house still repeat, with great zest, a variety of anecdotes illustrative of the eccentricities of the triumvirate. In my first series of this work I gave an amusing anecdote respecting Mr. Martin. A still better remains to be told. My only regret is, that no words can convey any idea of the thing itself. He had

been speaking of the bad feeling, frequently ending in duels, which was often engendered in the minds of honourable members in consequence of a misconception, not merely of what was meant, but often of what was said, by other honourable gentlemen. "And, Mr. Spaker," said Mr. Martin, with that rich Irish brogue which he retained till the last in as great perfection as if he had never heard an Englishman open his mouth; "And, Mr. Spaker, with your permission, I will give yourself and the House a case in point. That case, Mr. Spaker, occurred to meself. You know, Sir, and the House knows, that I was opposed at the last election for Galway by Dennis O'Sweeny. Now, Mr. Spaker, I said something on the hustings about Dennis, and by my faith Dennis said something about me.—[Loud laughter.] Well, Mr. Spaker, I bate Dennis—as the fact of my having the honour of addressing you, Sir, and honourable gintlemin around me, proves—at the poll, and was, sure enough, declared duly elected for Galway. Well, Sir, after the election was over, we met in a hotel, and Dennis comes up to me, and says, says he, 'Dick Martin, [roars of laughter,] you was after saying something in your spaach on the hustins about me, which was inconsistent with the character of a gintlemin.'

"'Faith, and it's yourself, Dennis, my boy, is quite mistaken in that same.'

"'I'm no such thing,' said he.

"'Indeed, Dennis, you are though; you was never more mistaken in all your blessed life,' said I.

"'Don't you think to humbug me out of my belief,

by any of your nonsense, Dick?" [Renewed laughter, in which the Speaker could not refrain from joining.]

" 'Then what was it I did say?' said I.

" 'You know that as well as I do,' said he.

" 'By —— I don't,'" said Mr. Martin, in his own unspeakably ludicrous manner.

" 'Order, order, Mr. Martin,'" shouted the Speaker, as the other thundered out an oath, amidst roars of laughter from all parts of the house.

" 'I beg your pardon, Mr. Spaker, and the pardon of this honourable House, if I said anything improper.

" 'By —— you do, though, Dick!' " said Dennis.

" 'Order, order, Mr. Martin; order, order!' " again sung out the Speaker, his voice being almost drowned amidst the peals of laughter which resounded throughout the house.

" 'Mr. Spaker!' " said Mr. Martin, with great simplicity, mingled with a wonderful shrewdness of manner, " 'Mr. Spaker, it was not meself that gave that oath, it was Dennis O'Sweeny!'"

Again was the house convulsed with laughter, and to such an extent were the risible faculties of the Speaker affected; that he was obliged to cover his mouth with the folds of his gown, while the sides of his ample wig literally danced about his neck and shoulders, in the agitation of his head caused by his excessive laughter.

Mr. Martin resumed—" 'Upon my honour as a gentleman, I don't know what you mane,' said I.

" 'Well, then,' says he, 'didn't you say I was——' I need not tell you, Mr. Spaker, what I said he was," observed Mr. Martin, suddenly checking himself. Here again the House was convulsed with laughter.

“ ‘Dick!’ says he, ‘you must retract.’ ”

“ ‘I’ll be —— if I do,’ says I, Mr. Spaker.”

Another burst of laughter pealed through the house, and to such an extent was the Speaker infected with the universal risibility, that he was actually unable to call Mr. Martin to order. The folds of his gown were again in requisition, with the view, if possible, of suppressing, by their application to his mouth, what is called a loud laugh. No man was ever more ready, at all times and in all circumstances, to uphold the dignity of the house by enforcing a uniform decorousness in the proceedings, than Mr. Manners Sutton, now Lord Canterbury; but the drollery of Mr. Martin’s manner, in conjunction with the oddity of his matter, would have been too much for the gravest and most dignified of men. The thing was altogether irresistible.

Mr. Martin, as soon as order was in some measure restored, resumed——“ ‘And you won’t retract, Dick,’ says Dennis.

“ ‘No, by——’ ”

“Order, order, Mr. Martin,” cried the Speaker, before Mr. Martin had uttered what the right honourable gentleman conceived to be another oath, and which he therefore wished to strangle in the birth.

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Spaker,” observed Mr. Martin, “but your honour was mistaken this time, and have put yourself to unnecessary trouble; for I was not going to swear any more. I was only going to say, ‘No, by the powers I won’t! I’d rather you’d make a riddle of my body first.’ ”

Roars of laughter, which lasted for a considerable

time, again resounded through the house. When they had subsided, Mr. Martin continued his story.

“‘Then,’ said he, ‘I expect the satisfaction which is due to a gentleman;’ and with that, Mr. Spaker, he was in the very act of laving the room. ‘Dennis,’ says I.

“‘What?’ says he.

“‘Don’t let us misunderstand each other,’ says I.

“‘It’s quite plain,’ says he.

“‘Maybe it’s not so plain as you think, Dennis,’ said I.

“‘Do you or do you not retract, and no more blarney?’ says he.

“‘No, I don’t,’ says I, ‘but if you’ll call on me to-morrow morning at breakfast-time, we’ll both explain, and then I’ll either break an egg or crack a flint with you—whichever you please, Dennis.’ [Loud laughter.]

“‘Well, I will, Dick,’ said he.

“And faith, sure enough, Mr. Spaker, Dennis O’Sweeny did kape his word, and he explained and I explained, and we both explained, and he left my room quite satisfied, and bowing to me as politely as the Masters in Chancery* do to you, Mr. Spaker, when they retire from your honour’s table.”

And so saying, Mr. Martin resumed his seat, amidst deafening roars of laughter, which lasted for two or three minutes.

* The allusion to the Masters in Chancery was exceedingly felicitous; for when they have delivered any message from the Lords to the Commons, they retire from the table walking backwards, and making a low bow to the Speaker at every third or fourth step they take.

The late Colonel Wilson was another singularly eccentric member. No consideration on earth could have induced him to utter a syllable before dinner; but on his return to the house, after having done ample justice to the good things of Mr. Bellamy, he was for speaking every night, no matter on what subject. And it was with no slight difficulty that his friends could dissuade him from addressing the House. On some occasions he not only proved deaf to all their entreaties, but could not even be prevailed on to desist from the attempt, though they pulled him with all their might by the tails of his coat, with a view to getting him to resume his seat. He always sat close to one of the iron posts of the old house, and entwining his arms round that post, as if most affectionately embracing it, he bade defiance to all the efforts of his friends to pull him backwards to his seat. In this extraordinary position, and amidst roars of laughter from all parts of the house, the gallant colonel proceeded to make his speech, which was always the most singular specimen of eloquence ever given, either there or elsewhere. No matter what the subject before the House, his speech was always substantially the same. It consisted of vehement protestations that he should defend to the last, and with his life if necessary, the constitution in Church and State. When honourable members endeavoured to laugh him down, or to put him down by getting up a scene of uproar, he had one invariable answer, which was, that he stood there "to tell the tale of his constituents," and that no man should divert him from his purpose. Whenever he was at a loss for words, he had

one doggerel couplet—whether of his own composition or not I am unable to say—which came with unfailing regularity to his aid, and which he repeated each successive time with as much earnestness as if he had never given it before. It was this—

“While I can handle stick or stone,
I will defend both Church and Throne.”

The gallant gentleman was always most energetic in his manner, and when his friends around him, seeing the hopelessness of any attempt to cause him to resume his seat before his own time had come, desisted from pulling him by the tails of his coat, he would withdraw his right arm from the post, and clinging to it with his left, would gesticulate with the emancipated arm with a vehemence rarely equalled in the house. On one occasion, he actually, when in one of his more violent moods, brought his right arm into such forcible collision with the shoulder of an honourable member who was sitting beside him, as to knock him off the seat altogether, and horizontally down on the floor.

Mr. Fuller, well known as the rich banker in the city, was no less eccentric than Colonel Wilson, though his oddities took a different turn. He had a deep-rooted dislike to speaking; he abhorred long speeches, no matter by whom they were spoken, and however able and brilliant. His notion seemed to be, that the business of a legislator was simply to *vote* on the measures submitted to the House. As for himself, no consideration could induce him, unless in very peculiar circumstances, to open his mouth at all until the question came to the

vote; and then he was one of the most prompt and energetic with his "Ay" or "No," as the case might be. Among the last times he ever expressed an opinion in the house, he made one of the shortest and at the same time drollest speeches ever spoken within the walls of parliament. That was more than twenty years ago. I do not remember the precise year, but it was at a time when great distress prevailed in the country; and the subject of debate in the house that evening was the national distress. Speaker followed speaker, and every one's picture of the general sufferings seemed to be darker than the other's. After this had gone on for several hours, "Jack," as he was always familiarly called, started to his feet when the previous speaker sat down, and in vociferous tones, and with the most vehement gesture, said, "Mr. Speaker, this is beyond endurance; I can stand it no longer. We have heard of nothing for the last four or five hours but everlasting representations of the distresses of the people, and of their dissatisfaction with their condition. Sir, I say, let those, — their eyes—who don't like the country leave it." And so saying, he sat down amidst peals of laughter, without uttering another word.

CHAPTER III.

SCENES IN THE HOUSE.

Sir Edward Knatchbull's scene—Mr. Blewitt's scene—
Mr. Daniel Whittle Harvey's scene—Sir Henry Har-
dinge's scene—Mr. Bradshaw's scene—Lord Maidstone's
scene—Smaller scenes.*

THE Victoria Parliament has already been productive of several of those uproarious scenes which are of such frequent occurrence in the House of Commons; and many more, I have no doubt, are in store for those who are partial to seeing the "first assembly of gentlemen in Europe" making themselves ridiculous. A variety of scenes took place on the night on which the conduct of the "Spottiswoode gang," as it has been called, was first brought under the consideration of the House. The House sat that evening till a quarter past ten; and from five o'clock till that hour, there was nothing but a continued succession of scenes. The usual discussions, indeed, constituted the exception, and the scenes the rule, on that memorable night. Sir Edward Knatchbull had the honour of commencing, quite unintentionally there can be no doubt, the uproar and disorder which so

* In calling the scenes referred to in the following pages, by the names of various honourable members, I merely mean it to be understood, that the scenes had their origin on some motion or observations made by the member alluded to.

largely characterized the after proceedings. He called Mr. O'Brien to order in a few moments after the latter honourable gentleman had risen to animadvert on the "Spottiswoode conspiracy." Sir Edward Sugden soon after followed the example of Sir Edward Knatchbull, and lustily called out "Order!" Both baronets interrupted Mr. O'Brien, on the ground that he was irregular in making observations when presenting a petition. Several other members soon mixed themselves up with the question of "order," and a regular scene followed. Four or five rose repeatedly at once, amidst deafening cries of "Order!" "Chair! chair!" and so forth. Among those who seemed most eager to rush into an altercation on the point of order, where Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Wakley, Mr. Lambton, and last, though not least, Mr. Henry Grattan. The latter honourable gentleman is most liberal of his gestures on all occasions on which he speaks: but when exhibiting in a "scene," he is particularly so. The interposition of the Speaker restored order for a time, but only for a time. Sir Francis Burdett made a speech which called up Mr. O'Connell; but the latter honourable gentleman had no sooner presented himself, than he was assailed by a perfect tempest of clamour from the Tory benches.

In the midst of all the noise and commotion which prevailed among the Opposition, and amidst all the din of voices at the bar and the moving of feet on the floor of the house,—loud cries of "Spoke! spoke!"—meaning that Mr. O'Connell had no right to rise a second time,—were distinctly heard. The honourable gentleman stood with his arms folded across his breast, in an

attitude of perfect calmness, and looked at the Tories opposite as if he had been bidding them defiance. At last, seeing the uproar continue, he threatened to move the adjournment of the House if the interruption was persevered in. He was then allowed to proceed for a few seconds, but was again assailed by cries of "Spoke! spoke!" "Order! order!"

Mr. Hume now rose with the view of seeing what he could do for the purpose of allaying the storm of uproar which was raging in the house; but poor good-natured Mr. Hume was himself received with increased shouts of disapprobation from the Tory benches; and what aggravated the thing was, that a universal yell of "Chair! chair!" was set up before he had uttered a single word. Good-tempered as the member for Kilkenny proverbially is, this was really more than human nature could endure, and he exclaimed with considerable sharpness and energy, looking "the enemy" fairly in the face, "Why 'chair,' when I have not—" The remainder of the sentence was lost amidst a most vociferous renewal of the general cry of "Order! order!"

Amidst some half dozen who now rose to speak from the Tory side of the house,—some of them exhibiting an alarming superabundance of gesticulation,—Sir Robert Inglis was heard to say that he called Mr. Hume to order, because the Speaker wished to make some observations. "But," shouted Mr. Hume, again starting to his legs before Sir Robert had time to resume his seat; "but how am I out of order?" Loud laughter, accompanied by additional uproarious demonstrations, followed the observation.

Eventually the Speaker's voice prevailed over that of the performers in the scene; and the scene itself was soon afterwards put an end to. In about twenty minutes, however, it was succeeded by another, though of a different kind. It was one to be seen, not to be described.

Sir Francis Burdett having been keenly attacked by Mr. Maurice O'Connell, and having been asked by Mr. Handley whether, after subscribing to the Spottiswoode fund, he would not feel it binding on him, as a man of honour, to abstain from voting on all matters connected with Irish elections,—all eyes were turned to him; but, instead of repelling the attack of Mr. Maurice O'Connell, or answering the question of Mr. Handley, he rose from his seat, and, without uttering a word, made a low bow to the Speaker, and with a steady pace, but a most ludicrous carriage, walked out of the house, as if he had been performing what soldiers call the dead march. The cheers of the Tories were deafening, while the laughter of the Reformers was so immoderate as to threaten serious injury to their sides.

Soon afterwards came the "last scene of all,"—the last, I mean, to which I shall advert—in "the strange eventful" proceedings of this memorable evening.

Mr. Blewitt, the new member for Monmouth, having concluded a speech of an hour's duration, by moving a string of resolutions nearly as long as the speech itself, condemnatory of the Irish Election Petition Fund, seemed perfectly at a loss as to whether or not he should press them to a division. The honourable gentleman, who is a little bustling man, leaped about from one part

of the house to another, asking the opinion of different members as to what he should do; and then, when he had got a most abundant supply of advice, all to the effect that he should withdraw his resolutions, he seemed to be as they say in Scotland, "in a peck of troubles" as to whether he should take it or not. It is impossible to describe the scene of confusion which the house presented at this time. The bar was so crowded with honourable gentlemen laughing and talking, and otherwise amusing themselves, that there was no getting out or in; while the floor of the house was promenaded by other honourable members, just as if they had been on the pavement in Regent-street.

Mr. Blewitt at last said something about withdrawing four resolutions, and pressing the fifth; but the noise and confusion were so great, that nobody but himself and the Speaker seemed to know anything of the matter. Eventually, amidst the same scene of disorder, Mr. Blewitt withdrew the remaining resolution; but nobody being aware of the circumstance, Mr. Peter Borthwick, Sir Edward Knatchbull, Mr. Goulburn, Colonel Sibthorp, Sir Edward Sugden, and a number of others, all rose at the same time, some to speak on the resolutions, and others to ask whether or not they were still before the House. The scene which ensued defies description. Mr. Blewitt and some of his friends rose, in threes and fours at a time, to assure the House that *all* the resolutions were withdrawn; while the Tory members not only started up in dozens to deny the fact, but were prepared, with great vehemence of gesture, to argue the point. Their friends, on either hand

and at their backs, came forward with an edifying promptitude and unanimity to support their hypothesis, as to the non-withdrawal of the resolutions, by loud cries of "They are not withdrawn," "No, no," &c. Groans, yells, and other zoological sounds proceeded from several parts of the ministerial side, by way of answer to the exclamations and affirmations of the Tories.

In the midst of this uproarious exhibition, the Speaker several times assured the House that the resolutions had all been formally withdrawn, and that there was no business before the House; but for some time they persisted in maintaining that he was mistaken. At last he satisfied the Tories, or at least seemed to do so, that the resolutions were withdrawn, and order was once more restored. But so keenly did the right honourable gentleman feel the disrespect offered to him in the implied doubt of his word, that he next evening intimated, that if such conduct were repeated, he would resign his office as Speaker.

A scene, somewhat different from either of the above, happened in the second week of the session. The occasion was that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer bringing the question of the Civil List under the consideration of the House. It will be remembered, that Mr. Daniel Whittle Harvey gave previous notice of his intention to propose an amendment to the motion of the right honourable gentleman. As is usual on such occasions, as a matter of courtesy, Mr. Harvey, before commencing his speech, handed to Mr. Spring Rice the amendment he meant to propose; but instead of giving

the right honourable gentleman a copy of the amendment in question, Mr. Harvey handed him the original itself, and this, too, without providing himself with a copy.

There can be no doubt Mr. Harvey's intention was to have asked his amendment back from Mr. Spring Rice before beginning his own speech; but having forgotten to do this, and also forgetting for the moment that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had his amendment in his possession, Mr. Harvey concluded an able and luminous speech by observing, with his usual volubility, that he now begged "leave to propose the following amendment." Mr. Harvey immediately leaned down to "pick up" his "following amendment" from among a quantity of papers which were lying on his seat; but no "following amendment" was to be found.

It was then that the fact flashed across his mind, that he had handed it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that the latter gentleman had not had the politeness to return it. "My amendment," exclaimed Mr. Harvey, with some tartness of manner, "is in the custody of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Be pleased to hand it me over." As the honourable gentleman uttered the last sentence, he looked anxiously towards Mr. Spring Rice, who was five or six yards from him, at the same time stretching out his hand to receive the document, when it should be returned to him, through the means of some of the intervening honourable gentlemen. Mr. Spring Rice looked amazed and confounded when the honourable member for Southwark so pointedly apostrophized him, as being the custodier of his

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amendment. To be sure, he said nothing in the first instance; but it was very easy to see that he was inwardly ejaculating, "Me, your amendment!" The fact was, that he also had become oblivious of the circumstance of the document being in his possession.

However, in a few moments the conviction was brought home to his mind, that he was a defaulter in this respect; and forthwith he commenced a most vigorous search for the amendment: Mr. Harvey all the while standing in his place, with his eyes as steadily fixed on the Chancellor of the Exchequer as if he had been about to play the cannibal with him. Mr. Spring Rice searched his pockets: the missing amendment was not there. He eagerly and hastily turned over a miniature mountain of documents, erected by his side, on the seat on which he sat: still there was no appearance of the lost amendment. He then rose up, and advancing to the table, rummaged for some time among a heap of papers there: the search was still in vain. He resumed his seat, and inquired of Lord Morpeth, who was sitting beside him, whether he knew anything of the mysterious disappearance of Mr. Harvey's amendment. Lord Morpeth significantly shook his head, being just as ignorant on the matter as the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself.

Lord Morpeth, however, kindly consented to assist in the search for the missing amendment; and great was the activity he displayed in turning and re-turning over, after Mr. Spring Rice, the various documents that lay on the seat and on the table.

Long before this time, Mr. Harvey, tired of holding

out his hand to receive that which was not likely to be forthcoming in "a hurry," had drawn it in, and, as if determined to take the thing as coolly as possible, folded his arms on his breast, and stood in that attitude with all the seeming resignation of a philosopher who patiently submits to a calamity which it is not in his power to avert. In the mean time, however, though thus motionless in one sense, he was not so in another. His tongue was occasionally set agoing.

He remarked on one occasion, with that bitter sarcasm of manner which is peculiar to himself, that this was the first document of his which had ever been taken so much care of by a cabinet minister. Roars of laughter, to the manifest mortification of Mr. Spring Rice, followed from both sides of the house. On another occasion, he observed that he was quite delighted to see that his amendment was so safe in the keeping of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as that no one could have any chance of abstracting it. All this time Mr. Spring Rice and Lord Morpeth were most exemplary, as regarded the eagerness with which they prosecuted their search for the lost document. It is worthy of remark, that no one joined with them; but all, even the Liberal members, seemed to enjoy the sport.

To the Conservatives, the affair was a rare piece of amusement. I observed some of them laughing heartily who were never seen to laugh within the walls of the house before, and in whose existence, even out of doors, a hearty laugh might be said to be quite an era. Mr. Spring Rice, after "turning about and wheeling about," in search of the amendment, with an agility worthy of

his namesake of Jim Crow notoriety, at length bethought himself of unlocking a small tin box, in which he keeps the more valuable of his papers; when, to his infinite joy, after rummaging for a few seconds among its contents, he discovered the missing amendment. He pounced upon it just as a Bow-street officer would on some offender, for whom he had been on a vexatious search, when alighting on him; and dragging the innocent amendment out of its place of concealment, held it up in his hand to the gaze of the House, exclaiming, as loud as his lungs would permit, and with an air of triumph, "Here it is! here it is!"

"I'm happy to see that the right honourable gentleman prizes it so highly," said Mr. Harvey, in the sarcastic way to which I have alluded, "as to place it among his most valuable papers, and to lock it up in his box." Peals of laughter followed, and during their continuance the amendment was handed over, through the assistance of two or three intermediate members, to the honourable gentleman whose property it was; who, as soon as it had reached him, read it amidst renewed peals of laughter. The bursts of laughter which were thus resounding through the house, were much increased by the circumstance of Colonel Sibthorp, who sat directly opposite to Mr. Spring Rice, rising with all his imperturbable gravity, and with his huge mustachios looking unusually large, to second the amendment. It certainly was a novelty in the proceedings of the House of Commons to witness the most ultra Tory, perhaps, in the house, rising to second an amendment on a vital question, moved by one of the greatest Radicals.

The shouts of laughter which followed the circumstance, had their origin in the impression that the gallant mustachioed Colonel had seconded the amendment in a mistake; but when it was understood that there was no mistake in the matter, and that the gallant gentleman was perfectly aware of what he was about, the Liberal members looked unutterable things at one another. It was at last understood that the Tories were, from factious motives, about to join the extreme section of the Reformers on that particular occasion, not doubting that in the event of a division ministers would be in a minority, and consequently be compelled to resign office. The circumstance, however, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer giving Mr. Harvey certain specific pledges in reference to the treatment of the Pension List, induced the latter gentleman to withdraw his amendment, which of course prevented any division taking place.

Perhaps the most memorable night for "Scenes in the House," in the history of Parliament for the last quarter of a century, was the night of the 23d of February last. For about an hour and a half on that evening, the house presented a continued scene of the most exciting kind, or rather three distinct scenes interwoven into one. Sir Henry Hardinge began the affair, without of course intending or anticipating anything of the kind, by asking Lord Palmerston when the remnant of the British legion in Spain might be expected home? The honourable and gallant officer added—"I have received intelligence that these unfortunate men are now kept at St. Sebastian, in a state of great destitution, misery, and starvation."

This statement was received by tremendous cheers from the Opposition.

Sir Henry Hardinge resumed—"I am informed that two hundred of them are on board the *Colombia*, to preserve them from starvation; that many of them are without trousers, scarcely any of them having shoes; and I have been informed, on good authority, that a sergeant had been found dead in consequence of the inclemency of the weather and the want of clothing."

Here again the house, which was crowded in every part, resounded with the tumultuous applause of the Tories.

Lord Palmerston, in answer to the question of Sir Henry Hardinge, said, that a frigate had been sent out to bring home those of the British legion who wished to return, and that a supply of clothing had been sent them.

All eyes were now turned towards Sir G. de Lacy Evans, and the most intense anxiety was manifested on both sides of the house, to hear what he would say in reply to the indirect attack of Sir Henry Hardinge on him.

After some preparatory observations, the late commander of the legion said, with great warmth—"I know as well as the right honourable gentleman the state of these men; nay ———"

Here Sir G. de Lacy Evans was interrupted by a loud roar of laughter from the Tory benches.

He continued—"Nay, I will venture to say, a good deal better than the right honourable gentleman. [Renewed peals of laughter, mingled with ironical cheers

from the Opposition side of the house.] I derive my knowledge from quite as good a source as the right honourable gentlemen; [Loud cheers from the Ministerial benches;] and I assert that there is no such thing as misery existing among those men. I have reason to believe that they have not been in a worse condition than the troops were under my own command."

It is impossible to describe the effect which the delivery of the last sentence produced on the Tory side of the house. Peals of laughter proceeded from every Conservative throat, while some honourable gentlemen, in the attempt to perpetrate an ironical cheer, actually failed, and, from the excess of their devotion to Momus, ended in giving utterance to sounds of so peculiar a kind as to admit of no description.

Sir George de Lacy Evans resumed—"I should like to know whether the conclusion of the sentence will be greeted in the same way by honourable gentlemen opposite, when I say, that those troops were not in so bad a condition as the British army was at different periods of the Peninsular war."

This being at once perceived to be a thrust at Sir Henry Hardinge, the sentence was received with deafening applause from the Ministerial benches, while the countenances of the Opposition all of a sudden assumed the most grave aspect. Sir George de Lacy Evans made one or two other observations, but the House was now wrought into such a state of excitement as to render him inaudible in the gallery.

Sir Henry Hardinge, who sat directly opposite the gallant officer, appeared, however, to have heard him,

for he instantly started to his feet, and said with great energy—"I have to observe I shall never, during the exercise of my parliamentary duty, think it necessary to regulate my conduct by the opinions of the gallant officer opposite. [Tremendous applause from the Tories.] I again assert that the treatment of those men has been of the most infamous description."

Renewed plaudits from the Opposition, with cries of "Order, order!" "Chair, chair!" from the Ministerial members, followed the latter observation.

In the midst of the uproar, Sir G. de Lacy Evans again arose, when the cries of "Chair, chair!" were renewed with tenfold violence. The gallant officer persevered in his attempts to address the House, but the uproar which prevailed completely drowned his voice. At last the Speaker rose, and appealed to Sir George de Lacy Evans and the House, whether, as there was no regular question before the House, the matter ought not now to cease.

Sir G. de Lacy Evans again rose to address the House, amidst tremendous cheers from the Ministerial benches, and amidst the most stentorian cries of "Chair, chair!" from the Tories. Sir A. Dalrymple rose nearly at the same moment, and made some remarks, but they were completely lost amidst the uproar which prevailed. This state of things continuing for some time, and there being no immediate prospect of order being restored, Lord John Russell rose and implored his honourable and gallant friend (Sir George de Lacy Evans) to sacrifice, for the sake of the House, his own personal feelings, by foregoing any further expression of them.

The gallant officer gave a seemingly reluctant assent, and the matter dropped.

The noise and excitement, however, which prevailed in the House, had not subsided above half a minute, when Mr. Bradshaw threw it again into a similar if not a worse state, by the honourable gentleman observing —“Having seen the appointment of Colonel de Lacy Evans to be Knight Commander of the Bath gazetted, I beg to ask the noble Secretary for the foreign department, (Lord Palmerston,) whether that appointment has passed through the regular course in the War Office, on the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief?”

It is impossible to convey any idea of the vehement cheering from the Conservative side of the house, which followed the latter sentence.

Mr. Bradshaw resumed—“I have always understood, that in all cases whatever her Majesty ———”

Here the honourable gentleman was interrupted by loud cries of “Order, order!” from the Ministerial side of the house. In the midst of the uproar and confusion which prevailed, the Speaker rose, and begged that the honourable gentleman would put his question.

Mr. Bradshaw—“Then I beg to ask, has the appointment passed through the regular channel—that is, through the Horse Guards?” [Deafening cheers from the Opposition.]

Lord Palmerston—“The answer which I have to make to the honourable gentleman is, that the appointment of Sir George de Lacy Evans to be Knight Commander of the Bath, was made in the usual manner by her Majesty’s government.”

A volley of Ministerial cheers followed the answer, which had the effect of darkening the countenances of the Opposition.

Lord Palmerston added—"With regard to the appointment itself, I will merely say, that I humbly venture to think that it was earned and well bestowed." [Vehement cheering from the Ministerial side of the house.]

Mr. Bradshaw—"It is with satisfaction that ——"

The honourable gentleman was interrupted by a storm of uproar, caused by cries of "Order, order!" "Chair, chair!" and other manifestations of excitement which proceeded from the Ministerial benches. In the midst of this new scene of tumult, and confusion, Lord John Russell rose, and, as soon as he could procure a hearing, said, "The honourable gentleman has asked a question which has been answered, and with that, I submit, he must be satisfied. [Loud cheers from the Treasury benches.]

Sir A. Dalrymple then said—"I wish to ask the noble lord a question with reference to the answer which has just been given to my honourable friend. I wish to ask ——"

The honourable baronet was interrupted by vociferous cries of "Order, order!" from the Ministerial benches, which cries were in their turn completely drowned by the tremendous cheering from the Opposition, given with the view of encouraging him to proceed. Nothing could exceed the noise and excitement which again prevailed in the house.

Sir A. Dalrymple, who remained on his legs, and

displayed the greatest self-possession, while the house presented this extraordinary scene, resumed the moment he could make himself heard. "I wish," he said, "to ask whether Sir George de Lacy Evans has been appointed Knight Commander of the Bath, as one of the ten foreign officers who, according to the rules of the institution, were eligible to that honour?"

Cries of "Oh, oh!" from the Ministerial benches, mingled with loud cheers from the Opposition, followed the question.

Lord Palmerston—"No, he has not."

Sir George de Lacy Evans then rose, amidst loud cheers from the Ministerial part of the house, while he was assailed with deafening cries of "Spoke, spoke," from the Opposition, and said—"As I have had the honour of a communication from the noble lord at the head of the army, the nature of which is rather incompatible with the questions which have been put by the honourable member (Mr. Bradshaw,) I think, as this is somewhat of a personal subject,] Loud cheers from the Ministerial side of the house, [I may be permitted to ask that honourable member whether he has received authority from that noble lord to put those questions." [Renewed cheers.]

From the tone and manner of the gallant officer, the universal impression in the house was, that it would depend entirely on the answer he received whether or not the matter would end in an affair of honour. Hence the deepest anxiety was felt to hear Mr. Bradshaw's answer. That answer was—"I have no authority from Lord Hill to put the questions I have done; but I have

received communications from many officers of the army, who feel it to be to them an unjust appointment.”

A volley of applause followed from the Opposition. On its echoes dying away the matter dropped, and order was once more restored.

But that order was again of but transient duration. In about two minutes afterwards the most extraordinary scene of all was exhibited. Lord Maidstone rose and said—“Seeing the honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. O’Connell) in his place, I wish to ask him whether some sentiments which I perceive reported as having been delivered by him at a dinner at the Crown and Anchor on Wednesday, are substantially correct?” (The noble lord here read an extract from Mr. O’Connell’s reported speech, charging the Tories with gross perjury when sitting on election committees.) “I ask the honourable and learned gentleman to give me a plain answer to the question I have put to him, as I cannot proceed any further until I have his answer.”

The plaudits from the Opposition which followed the noble lord’s question literally made the house ring again, while the faces of the Ministerial members looked as grave as if their own doom had been involved in the answer which Mr. O’Connell would make. When the noisy manifestations of joy made by the Tories at the circumstance of the question being put, had subsided, the greatest anxiety prevailed also on their side of the house, to hear the answer. The sudden transition from deafening noise to the most death-like stillness, as Mr. O’Connell rose, must have had a singular effect on the strangers in the gallery, which was densely crowded in

every part. Every one expected that Mr. O'Connell would either impugn the accuracy of the newspaper report of his speech, or that he would endeavour to explain away the offensive matter. Not so. He rose, and with the most perfect self-possession, and in a firm and steady voice, said—"I am exceedingly obliged to the noble lord for giving this publicity to the sentiments which I entertain on the subject of committees of a particular description in this house. [Hear, hear, from the Ministerial benches.] Sir, I did say every word of that."

It is impossible to convey an idea of the emphasis and energy of manner with which the honourable gentleman delivered this last sentence. The scene which followed baffles description. It is difficult to say whether the cheers of the Liberals, or the groans and exclamations of "Oh, oh," of the Tories, preponderated. The manifestation in so striking a manner of such opposite states of feeling had a very singular effect.

Mr. O'Connell resumed with, if possible, still greater energy and emphasis. "Yes, Sir, every word of that; and I do repeat that I believe it to be perfectly true."

Here the violent contention of sounds again burst, and with redoubled fury, on the ears of all present. The Liberals cheered themselves out of breath, while the lungs of the Conservatives must have been pained, if not damaged, by the vehemence of their shouts of "Oh, oh," "No, no." Nor was the excitement of either side of the house confined to the lungs of honourable gentlemen. The Liberal members in their anxiety to applaud in the most rapturous manner the

adherence of Mr. O'Connell to what he said, moved their bodies backwards and forwards, clapping in some instances their hands energetically, and in others striking their open hands on their knees; while the disapprobation of the Conservatives was also expressed by violent bodily gestures.

Mr. O'Connell, as soon as the excitement which prevailed would permit him, said—"Is there a man who will put his hand on his heart, and say upon his honour that he does not believe this to be true?"

This was the signal for a renewal of the uproarious applause on the part of the Liberal members, and for equally vociferous demonstrations of dissent and disapprobation on the part of the Conservatives. The cries of "No, no," from the Tories, and the shouts of "Yes," yes," from the Reformers, were in reality deafening.

Mr. O'Connell—"If there be such a man he would be laughed to scorn. [Cries of 'Oh, oh,' and vehement cheers.] It is a hideous abuse. The last time I addressed the House upon the subject, I read—"

Here Mr. O'Connell's voice was drowned amidst the cries of "Order, order!" which proceeded from the Opposition. In the midst of the uproar, the Speaker rose, and said that as the honourable and learned gentleman had answered the question of the noble lord, he must now appeal to the noble lord to know what motion he meant to submit on the subject.

This appeal on the part of the Speaker produced an extraordinary effect among the Conservatives. It threw them at once into the utmost confusion. Not dreaming

for a moment that Mr. O'Connell would not only admit, but reiterate in the house, the offensive expressions for which he was arraigned before the House, they were taken quite by surprise. They looked each other in the face with a most rueful expression of countenance; while whispers as to what ought to be done were passing as rapidly from one to another as it was possible to put them into words. Poor Lord Maidstone was most of all to be pitied. He was surrounded by eight or ten of his party, some suggesting one course for his adoption, some another. What made his case more embarrassing and painful to him, was the circumstance of his not only being a new member, and a young man only twenty-three years of age, but this having been the first occasion on which he had opened his mouth in the house. I think I never saw a more remarkable impersonation of good-nature and confusion than he exhibited on the occasion. His confusion was "worse confounded" by the roars of laughter, and other symptoms of exultation, at the embarrassment of himself and his party, which proceeded from the Ministerial benches. He looked imploringly for advice towards Sir Robert Peel, who sat some two or three yards from him; but Sir Robert, so far as I could perceive, did not proffer him any counsel. At length, on the suggestion of some honourable members, among whom, I believe, was Sir Edward Sugden, Lord Maidstone rose and said—"Sir, in consequence of the honourable and learned gentleman having admitted the truth of the charges preferred against him, I give notice of a motion for Monday next to bring his conduct before the House; for I do think that such an

aspersion passed generally on the members of this house ought not to have been made without proof."

The cheers from the Tory benches which followed this intimation exceeded, both in their loudness and the length of time they continued, any cheering I ever remember to have heard in the house, except on the occasion of some important party triumph on a division, when the closeness of the contest had rendered it impossible to say which side of the house would be victorious. And while the Tories were thus giving unrestrained vent to their feelings of joy at the pleasant anticipation of Mr. O'Connell's conduct being formally denounced by the House, the Liberals, who had flattered themselves with the hope that the Conservatives wanted the requisite courage to take any decided step in the matter, looked as demure and downcast as if each of them had been suddenly visited with some serious personal calamity.

"Time about," says the proverb, "is fair play." The events of the evening furnished a remarkable proof of the regular alternations of triumph and defeat, joy and sorrow, which both parties experienced in the contest. Now the Tories were triumphant, and yielded themselves up without restraint, to their unbounded joy; while the Liberals looked as grave and disappointed as if their political existence had been to close in a few hours. In a moment or two afterwards the victory and the exultation of the Reformers were complete and unlimited, while the countenances of the Tories all at once became darkened. The transition from the most uproarious joy in the case of both parties, to the lowest

depths of sorrow and despair, and *vice versa*, was so sudden, that had I not witnessed it, I could not have believed it possible. But decidedly the most remarkable instance of this sudden transition from one state of mind to its opposite state, occurred immediately after Lord Maidstone had given notice of his motion for bringing the conduct of Mr. O'Connell before the House. The exultation of the Conservatives, as I have already observed, on hearing this announcement, was unlimited, while the Liberals were as confounded and looked as crest-fallen, as if the death-knell of their party had been ringing in their ears. At the very moment that the joyous vociferations of the Tories were resounding through the house, Lord John Russell rose, and with an unusual loudness of voice and emphasis of manner, said, "Then, Sir, I beg to give notice that if this complaint be entertained by the House on Monday next, I mean to bring forward for the consideration of the House, the charge of the Bishop of Exeter respecting an allegation of perjury against certain members of this House."*

The effect of this announcement on both parties, though of course in opposite ways, was quite electrical. It is impossible by any description to convey an idea of it. It would have been a fine subject for the philosopher; it would have afforded him a most remarkable

*It was afterwards found, though that did not occur to any one at the time, that Lord John Russell's motion could not be maintained by the House, the Roman Catholic gentlemen whom the Bishop of Exeter had charged with perjury, having been so spoken of as the members of a previous parliament.

illustration of the rapidity with which, not one human mind only, but a great many human minds, could undergo a transition from one emotion to its very opposite. Lord John's announcement as effectually, and in an instant, hushed into silence the two hundred and fifty Conservative vociferous throats, as if each of their mouths had, by some supernatural agency, been instantaneously closed; while the Liberals, who but one moment before looked as if, in the excess of their disappointment and despair, they could never again have mustered spirit enough to utter an audible sound,—now made the walls of the house resound with their unanimous and hearty vociferations. I use no exaggeration when I say, that the plaudits of the Liberals were not only positively deafening to one's ears, but that they lasted so long as to prevent the House for some time from proceeding with the next business before it.

The scene which the House exhibited on Monday evening, after Lord Maidstone's motion had been carried by a majority of nine, declaring that Mr. O'Connell's imputations on honourable members were false and scandalous, and that he had been guilty of a breach of the privileges of the House, was in some respects more extraordinary than that I have endeavoured to describe. It lasted nearly two hours, without one moment's intermission. It was unintentionally begun by Mr. Hume getting up, after the numbers had been declared, and denying the right of the House to interfere in reference to speeches delivered out of doors by honourable members.

The sentiment was received with loud cheers from

the Ministerial benches, and with deafening cries of "Oh, oh!" from the Opposition, in the midst of which Mr. Hume stood as calm, and seemingly as much at his ease, as if nothing had been the matter. Mr. Hume having eventually resumed his seat, the Speaker put the second resolution moved, namely, "That Mr. O'Connell, having avowed the expressions in question, had been guilty of a breach of the privileges of the House." This was the signal for a renewal of the confusion and uproar.

Mr. Callaghan, the member for Cork, leaped that instant to his legs, and said—"However much I may disapprove in private of the use of language which ears polite cannot listen to without angry feelings, and feelings of reproach, I entirely concur in all the opinions and expressions avowed by the honourable member for Dublin."

The vociferous cheers, the loud cries of "Chair, chair!" "Oh, oh!" &c., which followed, coupled with the confusion which prevailed in the house, baffle any attempt at description. In the midst of the uproar the Speaker rose, and asked Mr. Callaghan whether he meant to invite the aggression of the House? A volley of Opposition cheers accompanied the question.

When the vociferations of the Conservatives had died away, Mr. Callaghan rose, and with the most entire coolness replied—"I quite bear in mind the caution of the Chair; but I think it due to the House and myself to rise in my place, and say that I am not to be intimidated by a party vote. [Loud cheering from the Ministerial benches, responded to by equally loud plau-

aits from the Conservatives.] I am not to be deterred from expressing my opinion, that if this vote be carried, there will be no end to the tyranny of the majorities of this House. [Renewed cheering.] I again declare that my sentiments are the same as those of the honourable member."

This was followed by the most deafening cheers from the Ministerial benches, and loud cries of "Order, order!" "Chair, chair!" from the Opposition, accompanied by such violent gesticulation on the part of honourable members in all parts of the house, as to give to the place altogether the appearance of a bear-garden.

When order was in some measure restored, the Speaker again interfered, and said with considerable energy, that the honourable gentleman was acting very disrespectfully towards the House in re-asserting the sentiments he did, after the vote which had just been come to in the case of the honourable member for Dublin.

On this, Mr. Callaghan again rose and said—"I really feel strongly on this subject. [Loud laughter, caused by the peculiar way in which the honourable member delivered the observation.] I do declare, and I dare to avow it, that I do adopt to the utmost ——" [Peals of laughter mingled with vociferous cheering, drowned the voice of the honourable gentleman so entirely, that not one syllable of the remainder of the sentence was heard.]

The confusion and excitement became, if possible, still greater as Mr. Roche, Mr. Gillon, and Mr. Somers, severally rose one after the other, and declared that

they also adopted and would adhere to the sentiments delivered by Mr. O'Connell at the Crown and Anchor meeting.

In the midst of the uproar Mr. Brotherton rose to move the adjournment of the House; on which Lord John Russell got up to state the course he meant to pursue, when he was interrupted by the Speaker, who said he was not in order. Lord John corrected himself, and expressed his strong disapproval of the course which the House had adopted in the case of Mr. O'Connell.

Mr. Henry Grattan then started up, and with the most violent gesticulation, dared the House to send Mr. O'Connell to Newgate. [Tremendous cheering from the Ministerial side of the house followed, and was responded to by ironical cheers from the Opposition.] When the noise had in some degree subsided, the Speaker rose and called Mr. Grattan to order. The latter gentleman then spoke in a subdued yet firm tone. In a few minutes afterwards the resolution was carried.

Then came the third resolution for Mr. O'Connell being reprimanded by the Speaker; when the house again presented a scene of uproar such as has very rarely been exhibited at any public meeting, however disorderly. Lord John Russell's opposition to the resolution was the circumstance which gave rise to it. "After," said Lord John, "what has passed to-night, and considering the course which he (Mr. O'Connell) is likely to pursue with regard to what they had just heard, I think that merely voting to reprimand him in his place is the most shabby, [Loud cheers,] the most faint-hearted, the most pusillanimous course that ever could be adopted."

The tremendous cheers from the Ministerial benches which followed this, prevented the noble lord from proceeding for some time.

When honourable gentlemen had exhausted themselves, Lord John resumed—"The honourable member is too formidable a person to be so dealt with. The effect of this resolution will be to call down to-morrow some hundred members of this House, ay, some of them with a copy of your resolution in their hands, to reiterate in their places the very expressions which you now state to be false and scandalous. [Vehement cheering from the Ministerial side of the house, which strangely contrasted with the perfect silence which reigned on the other side.] For my part, I must say, I cannot see where all this is to end. I must say that I think the noble lord (Maidstone) has led his followers into the most ridiculous position—[Loud cheers]—the most pitiable situation that ever men awoke and found themselves in—[Renewed bursts of applause]—a position in which their only excuse for not going further is to be found in the extreme folly—a folly incapable of being repaired—of having once begun ——"

The noble lord's voice was here drowned amidst the vociferous cries of "Chair, chair!" "Divide, divide!" "Adjourn, adjourn!" with which he was assailed by the Opposition, intermingled as those cries were by the stentorian applause of his own party. The uproar acquired so alarming an appearance—alarming, I mean for the character of the House—that Lord John felt it advisable to sit down abruptly, and leave his speech unfinished. And here I may observe, that this was the first

instance I ever knew of Lord John being put down in the middle of a speech. It certainly was a very remarkable circumstance, considering that he is the leader of the House of Commons.

Mr. C. W. Wynn then rose, but the scene of uproar and confusion which prevailed in the house prevented his uttering a word, notwithstanding the strenuous exertions of the Speaker to restore order, and procure a hearing for him. At length, amid many interruptions, the right honourable gentleman shortly addressed the House; but, like Lord John Russell, he was eventually obliged to resume his seat without finishing his speech.

Mr. Morgan John O'Connell then rose to espouse the cause of his father; but for some time his efforts to procure a hearing were ineffectual. By perseverance, however, he managed, notwithstanding all the interruptions from the Opposition, to make himself occasionally understood.

Mr. Jenkins followed, when the uproar was renewed and became worse than before. The scene now exceeded anything which it is possible to imagine. All was motion in the house. Not only were the ears of strangers assailed with all manner of sounds, but they saw nothing but motion and confusion before them. The members on both sides seemed as if incapable of sitting in their seats. There was nothing but uprisings and down-sittings among those on the benches, while the floor of the house and the bar had all the appearance of a crowded public walk, in which the pedestrians not only seemed to be in a great hurry, but very unceremoniously jostled each other about.

Mr. Barron next attempted to speak. If you heard the first part of any of his sentences, it was a thousand to one if you heard the conclusion. He, however, utterly regardless of the cries with which he was assailed, persevered for some time in the effort to make his sentiments known to the House. The storm of uproar and excitement raged with unabated fury, for at least three or four minutes after Mr. Barron resumed his seat.

When honourable members had in some measure exhausted themselves, Mr. Hume rose and moved, that "Mr. Callaghan, Mr. Roche, Mr. Somers, and Mr. Gillon, having in their places avowed their adoption of the expressions of Mr. O'Connell, are guilty of a breach of the privileges of the House."

This led to a renewal of the uproar. The scene of excitement, confusion, and noise which the house had presented for upwards of an hour and a half, now reached its height. It was impossible, by any conceivable means, to have made the confusion which now prevailed "worse confounded." The force of scene-making could no further go. Hitherto honourable gentlemen contented themselves with rising in scores and speaking in dozens, seven or eight always resuming their seats again; but at this particular part of the evening's exhibition, it seemed as if the whole of the Conservative side of the house, consisting at the time of about two hundred and fifty members, had not only risen, but spoken at once; that is to say, if to vociferate "Chair, chair, chair," until they had exhausted themselves, could be dignified with the name of speaking. Nor was the uproar on the Ministerial benches one whit less, only that the mode of

manifesting it was of a different kind. The Liberals were as liberal of their cheers when Mr. Hume made his motion, as the Conservatives were of their cries of "Chair, chair, chair!" But mere cheering did not satisfy the gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the house. Many of them, after converting their rounds of applause into a sort of braying, accompanied the wonderful achievements of their lungs by stamping with their feet on the floor, knocking the backs of the benches, and most energetically clapping their hands.

The Speaker at last endeavoured to obtain a hearing; but as soon might he have expected, by calling "Order, order!" to a tempest caused by elemental strife, to have converted that tempest into a calm, as that he should be able to restore order in the then state of the House, before honourable gentlemen had in some degree spent themselves. Finding all his efforts were wholly unheeded, and that it was useless to renew them for a time, the right honourable gentlemen wisely resumed his seat.

After the lapse of several minutes, Mr. Wynn contrived to make himself audible in some detached sentences. Mr. Callaghan, thinking that possibly he might be equally fortunate, again leaped to his feet on Mr. Wynn's sitting down, and repeated, amidst deafening uproar, his former avowal of adopting, in their fullest extent, the obnoxious expressions of Mr. O'Connell. While the honourable gentleman's voice was drowned amidst the vociferations of the other side, some of the Ministerial members were actually encouraging him to proceed, by patting him on the back, and urging him to go on by word of mouth. It was a curious sight to

see Mr. Callaghan, who rejoices in a portly body, snow-white hair, and a round, ruddy, farmer-looking countenance, standing with as much seeming unconcern amidst the scene which surrounded him, as if there had not been a person in the house but himself, and an unbroken silence had prevailed in the place. Mr. Hume and Mr. Henry Grattan contributed to prolong the scene by attempting to speak. At last Mr. Brotherton, seeing the Speaker's authority had completely failed, and not knowing any other means by which the storm of uproar which continued to rage could be hushed, moved the adjournment of the House. The honourable member's motion was lost by a large majority.

Mr. Charles Buller then attempted to address the House; but finding himself assailed in the same way as the honourable members who preceded him, he very wisely resolved to be revenged on those who interrupted him and drowned his voice, by moving the adjournment of the debate.

Sir Robert Peel opposed this, but seeing, as he himself expressed it, that the Liberals were determined to proceed with a series of motions similar to that of Mr. Hume, for the purpose of embarrassing and annoying the Conservatives, he did not persist in his opposition, and the scene—such a one, I verily believe, as has not, for length and violence combined, been exhibited in the House of Commons for at least half a century past—was put an end to by the adjournment of the debate.

The third night was not so productive of scenes; but still there was something of the kind to astonish the strangers in the gallery. Immediately after the divi-

sion on Mr. Hume's amendment, the House presented a spectacle which must have made the simple-minded natives of the provinces, unacquainted with such matters, feel amazed beyond measure. Mr. Henry Grattan, distinguished, even among the Irish members, for his warmth of temperament, rose to move another amendment.

His address on the occasion lasted from fifteen to twenty minutes, during which time the bar was so crowded with "deliberative" gentlemen, that he who forced his way in or out had reason to plume himself on his indomitable spirit, and his powers of overcoming physical obstacles. The floor of the house, again, had all the appearance of a public promenade. The scene altogether was one of which no idea can be formed from mere description.

Mr. Grattan concluded, and a host of other honourable gentlemen started simultaneously to their feet, with the view of addressing the House. Mr. Hume was the fortunate man in catching the eye of the Speaker, and he made a few observations, amidst cries of "Oh, oh!" and other undeliberative-like sounds from the Tory benches. In the midst of the interruptions offered to him, and the unusual confusion which prevailed in the house, the honourable member for Kilkenny paused for a moment, and then sat down.

In a few seconds afterwards he again rose; but just at the same instant, up started Mr. Charles Buller—who, singularly enough, chanced to sit next to Mr. Hume at the time—for the purpose of getting rid of a speech, which it was clear, at the time, proved a mental

burden to him too heavy to be borne. Both gentlemen proceeded to speak at the same time, most of the Tories calling out "Mr. Buller," while several of the Liberals indicated a preference to Mr. Hume. The latter, turning about his face from the Speaker to Mr. Buller, said, audibly enough to be heard by the greater part of the House, "You have no right to speak, unless you rise to call me to order."

"I rise," said Mr. Buller, again endeavouring to speak—"I rise for the purpose of ——"

"Sit down," interrupted Mr. Hume, with his characteristic good nature.

"Just allow me," said Mr. Buller, soothingly, "to make one single observation. As I am one of those ——"

Mr. Buller was about to say something more, but interrupted himself by a temporary fit of laughter with which he was suddenly seized, most probably at the ludicrous figure which he and Mr. Hume were cutting at the time, in their anxiety to address the house. Mr. Charles Buller, I should here remark, is not only full of good-nature, but has a very quick perception of the ludicrous.

"I am in possession of the House, and unless you mean to call me to order, I shall ——"

Mr. Hume was in the act of completing his sentence, when Mr. Buller interrupted him by putting his hand with considerable force on Mr. Hume's shoulder, as if about to cause him to sit down by an exercise of physical energy. Mr. Hume returned the compliment by stretching out his hand towards Mr. Buller in a similar way;

but I am not sure whether the latter did not gracefully put it aside. For a few seconds it appeared to me that each had hold of the other's arm, with the view of getting him to resume his seat. At last Mr. Buller, whose constant and liberal smiling while the scene lasted, showed how highly he enjoyed the fun, gave way in favour of Mr. Hume, who proceeded to address the House.

The affair was altogether a rich one, to those whose position in the house enabled them to see distinctly the countenances of the two members, when contesting their right to a priority of hearing.

The consideration which induced Mr. Hume to persevere was evident from the first: he conceived that it was his right, in consequence of being in possession of the House; and so it doubtless was. The motive for Mr. Buller's anxiety to speak was not so apparent in the first instance; but when Mr. Hume had concluded, and it came to his turn, the secret oozed out. He stated, in the course of his short address, that he had been very seriously inconvenienced on the previous night by the loss of his dinner, through the "foolish discussion" which had arisen on the question of privilege, and added that he felt no disposition to suffer a similar living martyrdom through a similar "foolish discussion" that evening. These were not the precise words of Mr. Buller, but they convey the sentiment he expressed. People may laugh as much as they please at the idea of a legislator encumbering himself with thoughts about his dinner, while an important question is under consideration; but such is the fact. And how could it

be otherwise? The legislator is just as liable to the inroads and annoyances of hunger as his fellow-mortals in the more lowly walks of life.

One great object of Mr. Buller's speech was to bring the matter before the House to a close, and let the members go home to dinner. He was successful; the House soon after divided, and the members, feeling themselves released from their obligations to the respective parties to which they belonged, a majority of them rushed out with all practicable expedition. In less than five minutes, the place which was crowded with honourable gentlemen could only boast of a mere handful of legislators.

The affair, or "the farce," as it was generally called at the time, was brought to a close on the following night, by the Speaker reprimanding Mr. O'Connell, in his place in the house.

"Mr. O'Connell!" shouted the Speaker.

"Here, Sir!" answered the honourable and learned member for Dublin, starting to his feet.

The Speaker proceeded to administer, in the name of the House, a severe reprimand to Mr. O'Connell, with all imaginable gravity, for the intemperate and improper language he had made use of at the Crown and Anchor dinner.

Mr. O'Connell took the thing remarkably easy. He never seemed more in his element in his life. When the Speaker sat down, he repeated every word of the obnoxious matter, and in a few minutes afterwards quitted the house.

He was met by a friend of mine in the lobby as he

was going out, who accosted him with—"So, they have been reprimanding you!"

"Yes," replied Mr. O'Connell, with his own peculiarly characteristic smile, "and I have been reprimanding *them*."

Such are some of the leading scenes which have been exhibited in the House of Commons since the opening of the present session. Such scenes are not of unfrequent occurrence. They are to be witnessed much too often, in so far as the character of the House is concerned. No stranger ever quitted the gallery of that house, after seeing such manifestations of the bear-gardening propensities of honourable members, without feeling a very considerable diminution of his respect for the "deliberative assembly" and their proceedings. If the house itself could be detached from the members, and possessed the attribute of consciousness and the faculty of speech, it would rebuke such of its members as act in the way I have described, in terms similar to those employed by the frogs in the pond when pelted by the thoughtless and unfeeling boys:—"This may be sport to you, but it is death to me." It is, in fact, destructive of the character of the House.

There are scenes on a smaller scale to be witnessed in the House of Commons, of which I have said nothing. They are of almost nightly occurrence. The number of members who figure in these scenes are fewer, and they seldom last many minutes. Yet some of them are of a very rich description. Occasionally a decidedly laughable thing is said by the Speaker, or by some of his auditors,—if the latter be not in such a case an

abuse of language. In February last, on the night on which Mr. Jervis moved, in opposition to Lord John Russell, that the shilling fee for the registration of voters should be done away with, a scene was suddenly got up, by a number of Ministerial members rising at once, to implore Mr. Jervis to withdraw his amendment, while the Tories were remarkably clamorous for the honourable gentleman to divide on it. Among the supporters of Ministers who rose, and with great vehemence of manner sought to dissuade Mr. Jervis from pressing the matter to a division, was Mr. Briscoe, member for Westbury.

Immediately on the honourable gentleman's having finished his first sentence, some trusty Conservative on the other side sung out, in a regular hunting tone,—“Tallyho! Epsom!” The peculiarly ludicrous way in which this was spoken, created loud laughter among all who heard it; though, from the confusion and noise which prevailed in the House at the time, it was not generally heard. Had it reached the ears of Mr. Briscoe himself, he could not, I am sure, have refrained from joining in the laugh. What gave it so much effect was the fact of Mr. Briscoe being the proprietor of the Epsom racing grounds.

Another very laughable incident occurred in one of the recent smaller scenes. An Irish member, whose name I will not mention, having risen, he was assailed by loud cries of “Spoke! spoke!” meaning, that having spoken once already, he had no right to do it a second time. He had evidently a second speech struggling in his breast for an introduction into the world, when see—

ing, after remaining for some time on his legs, that there was not the slightest chance of being suffered to deliver a sentence of it, he observed with imperturbable gravity, and in a rich Tipperary brogue—"If honourable gentlemen suppose that I was going to spake again, they are quite mistaken. I merely rose for the purpose of saying that I had nothing more to say on the subject."

The House was convulsed with laughter, for a few seconds afterwards, at the exceedingly ready wit of the Hibernian M. P.

CHAPTER IV.

LATE CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS.

Sir George Clerk—Mr. Hughes Hughes—Mr. Hardy—Sir John Elley.

SIR GEORGE CLERK, late member for the county of Edinburgh, chiefly confined his speeches to questions immediately affecting Scotland. On these he scarcely ever let slip an opportunity of addressing the House. On all Scotch matters, indeed, he may be said to have been the leader of the Tory benches. He is a good-looking man, considering that he has reached his fiftieth year. He has a fresh complexion, and has all the appearance of good health. His figure is above the usual height, and is rather stout. His hair is of a dark grey colour; but he is bald to a considerable extent. In addressing the House he hesitated a good deal; not, however, in the unpleasant way in which many honourable

members do. His voice is clear, and his articulation distinct. He spoke with some rapidity in the House, but there was no variety either in the tones of his voice or in his gesture. He was a quiet speaker; his manner would not lead any one to infer that he was anxious to be considered an orator. His action, if so it must be called, almost exclusively consisted of an alternate gentle waving of his right hand, and in seizing and letting go again one of the buttons of his waistcoat. He is a man of fair talent. His speeches always contained good sense, but never anything brilliant. His style is plain, but correct. He is a man of a sound judgment, rather than of a masculine mind. He is incapable of grappling with first principles. It was on matters of little interest that he appeared to most advantage. He was most at home when discussing the details of a measure. He was much respected by all parties, and was always listened to with attention. In return for what other members call "the indulgence of the House" thus extended to him, he made short speeches. Nothing but a question which appeared to him to be of paramount importance, would induce the right honourable baronet to speak longer than ten or fifteen minutes at a time. Five minutes often sufficed for his purpose. He is a decided Tory in his politics. His manners are amiable and gentlemanly. He long enjoyed a seat in the house, and until the late election it was supposed he might consider his tenure of the county of Edinburgh secure for many years to come. The excellence of his private character contributed to swell the list of his supporters.

MR. HUGHES HUGHES, late member for Oxford, al-

ways sat in the same locality in the house as Mr. Scarlett and Mr. Arthur Trevor. I mention this circumstance now, because I shall afterwards have occasion to refer to it. That locality, it may be right to state, is on the left hand of the Speaker, and immediately behind the seats occupied by Sir Robert Peel, Lord Stanley, and Sir James Graham. Had I carried into effect my original purpose of devoting a separate chapter to the "Unpopular Members," the name of Mr. Hughes would not have been omitted in the list. He was one of the most unpopular members in the house. Possibly it was because of a feeling of sympathy with each other, on account of finding themselves in this kind of adversity, that the two just named were severally attracted to the same topographical department of the house. This, however, is only an hypothesis of my own. The reader is at liberty to reject it, if he do not deem it a sound one. The fact, at all events, is as I have stated.

Mr. Hughes Hughes's rising to address the House was usually the signal for an uproar. The approved means of endeavouring to put down an unpopular speaker—the means, namely, of hisses, yells, and all sorts of menagerical sounds—were immediately resorted to. He generally, however, stood the fire exceedingly well. He seldom gave way to clamour when he did rise; but the unfavourable reception he was in the habit of meeting with, for the last two or three years, had the effect of deterring him from addressing the House with the same frequency as before.

Mr. Hughes Hughes is in pretty much the same pre-

dicament, as to his past and present politics, as several other honourable members. He *was* a Reformer: at any rate, he professed and acted on Liberal principles for some time after the passing of the Reform Bill. I have no theory to advance as to the causes which have led him to enroll himself among the tories. The date of his political transformation was a short time before the meeting of the parliament of 1835. He wrote a letter to a Tory morning paper, in which he threatened his opposition to the Liberal party, and indicated a disposition to support the Peel administration. Before that time he had a respectable status in the House; afterwards he had none whatever.

He was not an orator. His manner was heavy and monotonous. The tones of his voice, and the action with which he tried to give effect to his speeches, were destitute of variety. His articulation was distinct, and his utterance was timed with some judgment to the ear; but their effect was marred by the sameness of voice and gesticulation to which I have just referred. His action was not only always the same, but it was tame in no ordinary degree. It consisted simply of a little motion with his arms, and a slight movement of his head.

Neither did the matter of Mr. Hughes Hughes redeem his manner. It was always dull: you might as well have looked for the lily of the valley amidst the everlasting snows of the cloud-capt summit of Mont Blanc, as for a brilliant or profound thought, or an eloquent passage, in the speeches of the late honourable member for Oxford. His style was feeble and unpolish-

ed, and was consequently in keeping with his sentiments. He managed, however, to get through his speeches, which had always the merit of being brief, with tolerable ease. Sometimes, indeed, you would have been inclined to call him a fluent speaker; though, if you bestowed a single thought on his ideas and diction, you must at once have seen that his addresses were poor indeed.

He is apparently about his fortieth year. His personal appearance, like his speeches, is heavy. He is about the middle height, and rather fully made. His features are large: his eyes are particularly so. His face inclines to rotundity. His complexion is sallow, and he generally rejoices in an ample crop of dark-brown hair.

MR. HARDY, late member for Bradford, was comparatively little known in the house when I wrote my First Series of "Random Recollections." Since then he brought himself prominently into notice. The part he took in the affair between Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Raphael was of great service to him in his efforts to emerge from obscurity. The very circumstance of entering on the order-book, notice of a motion for the purpose of taking Mr. O'Connell to task for the part he played in that memorable drama, contributed greatly of itself, to attract the eyes of all his brother legislators to the then member for Bradford. To attack the "Agitator," as Mr. Hardy was in the habit of calling him, in what was then considered his most vulnerable part, was at once set down as arguing the possession of no ordinary moral courage. As might naturally be inferred under these

circumstances, the motion of Mr. Hardy, and the speech with which it should be prefaced, were looked forward to with unusual anxiety. Some of his friends had serious misgivings as to the way in which he would acquit himself; but the event proved that their fears were groundless.

"The day, the great, the important day," big with the oratorical fate of Mr. Hardy, having arrived, and his name being called by the Speaker, he rose, and after a few general observations, in the usual shape of humbly soliciting the indulgence of the House—professing his overwhelming sense of his inability to do justice to the subject—being induced to undertake the task by a sense of duty—disclaiming personal motives—and so forth; after a few such common-place remarks, the honourable member leaped at once into the heart of his subject. He abused O'Connell right and left. He inveighed against him in terms of bitterness, and in a tone of boldness, which few members had ventured to display in speaking of the honourable and learned member for Dublin. His speech occupied nearly three hours in the delivery: it certainly displayed considerable talent. His invective was often happy, as well as bold; his observations were sometimes acute, and his wit was in many instances pointed; and what, perhaps, was still more serviceable to him, he was most vociferously cheered by the Conservatives from the beginning to the end of his speech. But what was most important of all, he was replied to by O'Connell at considerable length.

All these lucky circumstances conspired to make a parliamentary reputation to the honourable gentleman,

in what an Irishman would call "less than no time." In the short space of three hours, Mr. Hardy was raised from the size of an oratorical dwarf to the dimensions of a giant. Then came the "Standard" of the following day, representing, in the usual spirit of exaggeration which characterizes that able and honest journal, the speech of the honourable member, as the most masterly oratorical effort ever made within the walls of parliament. This did for the honourable member, among the Conservatives of the country, what the circumstances I have mentioned had done for him in the house. For some time Mr. Hardy possessed an enviable station as a member of the legislature. He did not, however, long retain his elevated position. He did nothing afterwards to keep up the reputation which this isolated effort had gained for him; and latterly his station in the house was very little better than it originally was.

Mr. Hardy is a man of very respectable talent. Brought up to the bar, he can, like most of the gentlemen of the long robe, speak with much ease and fluency. His voice is not in his favour as a speaker: it has something of a bass muffled sound: and he does not, except when excited, which he very seldom is, speak in sufficiently audible tones. His enunciation is rather rapid, but not unpleasantly so. His gesture is usually moderate: the only instances in which I have seen it verge on vehemence, were on two or three occasions last year, when vindicating himself from the charge of having been guilty of bribing the electors of Pontefract, by paying them head-money. On that occasion his action was so energetic as to border on the ridiculous.

Mr. Hardy, until within the last few years, always identified himself with the Liberal party. What has produced the change in his opinions, I have not the means of knowing; but there was not latterly a more thorough-going Conservative on the Opposition side of the house. He invariably sat behind Sir Robert Peel, and was one of the greatest of the right honourable baronet's numerous admirers.

Mr. Hardy has usually a grave appearance; he is by no means prodigal of his smiles; nor was he so communicative to those around him as most of the Conservative gentlemen on the Tory side of the house are to each other. It was no uncommon thing to see him sitting with his arms folded across his breast, quite in the Napoleon style, for a couple of hours at a time, without exchanging a word with any one, or without relaxing for a moment the rigidity of his features. I am satisfied there were few members in the house who could claim the merit of being more attentive to what was going on. He might with a special propriety have been called the deliberative member. I have often had occasion to witness his imperturbable gravity in the course of the last two sessions; for before that time he occasionally looked cheerful. I have seen him, while the whole House was convulsed with laughter, sit as unmoved as if he were a statue, and look as serious as any poor fellow ever did when sentence was passing on him at the Old Bailey. If he ever did condescend to laugh, the funny thing which excited his risibility, must needs have come from some member on his own side of the house. As regarded the humour of Mr. O'Connell—usually the ~~most~~ **most** laughter-provoking speaker in the house—Mr. Hardy would

not have been guilty of laughing at any thing the "Agitator" said, were he to have received worlds in return. It seemed to be one of his fixed principles—to be an essential part of his political creed—to be thoroughly conservative of his smiles when a Liberal spoke, however droll and happy the humour of that Liberal's speech might be.

The most hearty laugh which the ex-member for Bradford ever perpetrated while I was in the house, was on the 8th of February last year; and surely, if ever it was excusable in him, or in any honourable member, to deviate from the gravity so very becoming the legislative character, the occurrences of that evening afforded that excuse. Sir Robert Peel, on that occasion, appeared for the first time in the capacity of a comic actor. Sir Robert had always, as I have mentioned in the First Series of my "Random Recollections," been allowed, on all hands, to excel every other member in sustained deep tragedy; but no one ever before gave him credit for comic powers of a superior order. Now and then he had, on previous occasions, contrived so far to approach the comic, as to excite a slight smile on the countenances of a few honourable members, remarkable for their predisposition to risibility; but that was the full extent of the right honourable baronet's achievements in that way. On the night, however, to which I refer, he appeared, to the astonishment and admiration of the House, in the character of a first-rate comic actor. And, never, I must say, have I, on the stage or off it, seen a piece of more consummate comic acting than ~~that of the~~ the right honourable baronet, in some parts

of his speech that night. The account given of the following passage in it in the papers of next day, conveyed no idea of the thing itself. He had been reprobating the circumstance of Lord Mulgrave having some time before liberated all the criminal prisoners, in the towns which that nobleman had visited as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. And having exhausted his censure of the act, in the gravest terms he could employ, he thought to punish the government still more, by turning it into ridicule. He said he had given the only instance of a similar act with which he was acquainted in real life, and he had given it in plain prose. He would now give another instance of a poetical character, taken from the realms of fiction. "This," exclaimed Sir Robert Peel, to use his own words,—“this is the only instance I know of, in which mercy was extended to persons confined for offences against the law, on the visit of a chief governor. Oh, yes!” he continued, as if correcting himself, “Oh, yes! there is another instance that occurs to my mind; but it is of a poetical nature, and is taken from the regions of fiction. It is recorded in a farce——”

Here the right honourable baronet turned his back to the House and the Speaker, and looked his friends, including Mr. Hardy, in the face, with one of the drollest expressions of countenance I ever witnessed. The roars of laughter which followed prevented him for some time from completing the sentence.

“It is,” he resumed, “recorded in a farce—a farce, I believe, known by the name of *Tom Thumb*.”

Here, again, Sir Robert not only wheeled about, and

looked his friends in a singularly odd way in the face, but pronounced the words in so remarkably comic a manner that the whole House was thrown into a violent fit of laughter, which lasted for some time.

"If I recollect rightly," continued Sir Robert—"and the noble lord, who is quite a classical authority in such matters, will correct me if I am wrong, for I merely quote from memory—if I recollect rightly, the King and Lord Grizzle appear on the stage."

Here the irresistibly comic pronunciation and gestures of Sir Robert again threw the House into a roar of laughter, which lasted for some time. Partial gravity being restored, he proceeded.

"The King says—'Rebellion is dead—let us now go to breakfast.'"

Again did the house resound with peals of laughter, which promised for a time *never* to have an end. Even Lord John Russell—the *least guilty of* laughter of any man I know on the Ministerial side of the house—even he joined in the universal shout, and shook his little sides to a degree which seemed at one time to threaten serious consequences. But the best of all is yet to come.

"To celebrate the illustrious and auspicious event;" the event—namely of the death of rebellion—"to celebrate," continued the right honourable baronet, "this illustrious and auspicious event, the King further says—'Open the prisons—turn the captives loose—and let our treasurer advance a guinea to pay their several debts.'"

It were as impossible to convey any accurate notion of the inimitable manner in which the right honourable

baronet here suited the action to the words, as it would be to describe the scene which followed. The comic tones of Sir Robert's voice, the positions in which he placed himself, and the expression of countenance he assumed, are still ringing in my ears, and are before my eyes, as distinctly as if the scene had only occurred five minutes before writing this account of it.

Had Farren, or Liston, or the late John Reeve, been in the gallery at the time, they would severally have blessed their stars that Sir Robert was destined to perform on the political stage, instead of on the boards of any of our theatrical establishments; for the conviction would have been forced on them, that in such a case he must have thrown them all completely into the shade. The peals of laughter which followed were as sudden and simultaneous as if they had been the result of some electrical experiments on the members.

Mr. O'Connell never, even in his most forcible moods, produced so much "agitation" in any assemblage he ever addressed. The whole house seemed instinct with motion. The members appear to have lost all command over their risible faculties. Many of the most corpulent of them were inconvenienced from a want of room; more room being now necessary, owing to the motion of their bodies. Even the great "Agitator" himself was not exempt from the universal "agitation." It was with difficulty he could support himself. But it was on the Tory side of the house that the effects of Sir Robert Peel's consummate acting were most visible. *There*, there was a perfect tempest of agitation. Had a stranger chanced to enter the gallery at the time, there

would have been no resisting the conclusion that the Tories were all labouring under the influence of some unaccountable agency. For some time they literally "roared out" their laughter, and dozens of them, whose voices were never before heard in that house, showed that if they were not orators, it was from no want of lungs. As for their bodies, again, they moved backwards and forwards with edifying celerity, their heads vibrating as regularly between their knees and the backs of their seats, as if they had all been moved by wires. *Every* body in the house laughed :

"Those laughed now who never laughed before,
And those who always laughed, now laughed the more."

Nor is this all. I am confident that had the celebrated weeping philosopher of antiquity himself been present, he could not have refrained from joining in the universal laugh. He would, for the moment, have dried up his tears, and given full play to his risible faculties. In truth, no human being could have heard and seen Sir Robert Peel, without flying off at a tangent into a violent fit of laughter. It was fortunate for the Speaker that it is no part of his duty to call the house to order when it has been thrown into a state of merriment; for he could not have performed that duty. Even his gravity was upset; while the poor officers of the house, whose duty it is to see that there be no laughter, nor any other noise, among strangers, instead of being able to keep order, were unable to preserve it amongst themselves. They joined in the general laugh; they committed the very offence for the prevention of which, on the part of others, they are appointed and paid. Indeed,

it looked precisely as if everybody had been striving to gain some prize which had been promised to the party who should prove himself the best laugh.

Mr. Hardy played *his* part in the singular scene. And with a view of accounting for so unusual an occurrence in his history, I have ventured on this slight digression. The circumstances under which he laughed were off so peculiar a kind, that supposing the house generally had abstained from laughter on the occasion, he could not have preserved his gravity. At any rate, if he had not laughed in reality, he must, for the sake of common politeness, have affected to do homage to Momus; for Sir Robert Peel repeatedly fixed his eye on Mr. Hardy during the performance of his part, and looked as if he had been acting for his special gratification. But, in addition to this, Mr. Hardy happened to sit between Mr. Serjeant Jackson and Mr. Serjeant Lefroy; and as they moved backwards and forwards in their seats with as much regularity, and seemingly in as cordial sympathy with each other, as if they had been a sort of political Siamese twins, the honourable member for Bradford was, by their pressure, subjected to a species of necessity of moving backwards and forwards with them. As, consequently, it would have looked exceedingly awkward to have seen the honourable gentleman propelled backwards and forwards, in the way to which I have referred, without laughing, while everybody was laughing around him, it was to be expected that he would have done his best to force a laugh, had the thing not sprung up spontaneously in his own throat, under the singular circumstances of that evening.

Mr. Hardy, though very reserved when in the house, and remarkable for his gravity in all public places, is a very sociable gentleman, and pleasant companion in private life. He is a man of excellent moral character. I believe his greatest enemies must admit that in the affair of the payment of head-money, which Mr. O'Connell brought before the house under the name of bribery, his vindication of his conduct was, in all the circumstances of the case, of a satisfactory nature. What he did, he did openly; and he only did what was quite common among reformed candidates of unquestioned integrity at the time. The payment of head-money was, indeed, a part of the system which then—the matter occurred several years ago—obtained in electioneering matters.

Mr. Hardy is, I understand, a religious man. He takes a lively interest in all matters pertaining to the well-being of the Protestant establishment. He has always voted for a Sabbath Protection Bill.

In his personal appearance there is nothing marked. He is rather below the average height, but somewhat robustly framed. His hair is white, and his complexion slightly florid. His face is round, and has an intelligent expression. He is approaching his fifty-fifth year.

SIR JOHN ELLEY, the late member for Windsor, did not often trouble either himself or the House with his speeches; but whenever he did "drop a word or two," to use his own expression, he was always listened to with attention. There was something, indeed, so indicative of good-nature in his appearance, that no other feeling than one of kindness could be shown towards

him by the House. Both his matter and manner were generally humorous. His speeches had always the merit of originality. He never attempted argument; nor did he try his hand at declamation. The utmost extent of his ambition, as a parliamentary orator, seemed to be to excite a laugh in his audience. In this he was usually successful. His observations had generally something humorous in them; and their effect was greatly heightened by his odd manner of delivering them. He spoke in a slow cautious manner, and in a curious lisping tone of voice, caused in a great measure by the loss of some of his teeth. There was a perpetual smile on his countenance when on his legs; and whenever he came to the end of any sentence which he deemed adapted to produce a laugh, he buried his head in his breast, and waited patiently in that position, until the features of honourable members had resumed their wonted gravity. There was something unspeakably odd in the way in which Sir John managed his neck and head when addressing the House. His shirt collar was always so high as to press against his ears; consequently very little of his neck was seen, in ordinary circumstances. The moment, however, he rose to speak, he stretched his neck to such an extent, that one could not help inferring that it possessed something of the elastic properties of India rubber. The sudden transition from this crane-like appearance of Sir John's neck to the insertion of his head in his breast, as if he had no neck at all, had, as I have just said, a very ludicrous effect; and this oddness of his manner, coupled with the humorous character of his matter,

afforded much amusement to the House; which seemed to be in Sir John's estimation the great business of a legislator.

He was a most exemplary Tory in so far as his votes were concerned; but he showed no traces of party virulence in his speeches. They were full of good-nature. He made no personal allusions to any one. He seemed to be on good terms with everybody, and everybody in return seemed to feel kindly towards him.

Sir John Elley is a man considerably advanced in years. He is upwards of sixty. The active military service he performed in the Peninsula, and various other parts of the world, has contributed to make him look older than he really is. He has somewhat of an infirm appearance. He is tall, and rather slenderly made. His face inclines to the angular form. His nose is sharp, and of large proportions. His complexion is sallow, and his hair of an iron-grey colour. He has moderately-sized whiskers and large eyebrows.

Sir John was manifestly uncomfortable in the house. It was a mistake in his destiny to send him there. He usually leaned on his staff with both hands. At times he was to be seen resting the back of his head against the wall; for he almost invariably sat on the backmost bench. In such cases he usually took a nap to himself, especially if the proceedings, which was then no uncommon occurrence, had a soporific tendency. I was amused, one evening in February last year, to see the sudden start which Sir John gave, on the utterance of a "tremendous cheer," with which one portion of the speech of the Irish Attorney-General was greeted.

Possibly he may at the time have been in that half-waking, half-sleeping state, during which one's imagination is so active, and he may have fancied the loud shout of applause which broke on his ear from the Ministerial benches, was the cannon's roar of the enemy.

There is another honourable gentleman whose name I have never been able to learn, who, when the house was full, always sat within arm's length of Sir John. They were in the habit of exchanging pinches of snuff together; but I never observed them enter into conversation with each other. They were as silent as if they had been dumb. While seeing Sir John sitting on the back bench by himself, he has often reminded me of certain personages in Milton's "Paradise Lost," who "far apart sat on a hill retired." There was, however, this difference between Milton's personages and Sir John, that whereas they were lost in "reasonings high" about certain metaphysical points in polemical theology, Sir John threw metaphysics, as Macbeth advised his doctor to do physic, "to the dogs," and either lost himself in sleep, or in his musings about the Junior United Service Club.

The only time he ever seemed to enjoy himself, was when military matters were under discussion. He was in the third heaven when Mr. Maclean, or Lord Mahon, or anybody else, brought the affairs of Spain before the House. At all other times he was so much out of his element, that he appeared as dull as if he had, like Alexander Selkirk, been the sole inhabitant of some desert isle. Legislation had no pleasure for him; and he proved this by the frequency of his absence

from the house. His great source of enjoyment is in talking over the adventures of his military career, in the Junior United Service Club. But for that club, life would have but little attraction to Sir John. It is an institution near and dear to his heart. He talks about it wherever he chances to be. He thought about it, and longed to be in it, when performing his parliamentary duties; and it was then, as it still is, the subject of his frequent visions by night. He is excellent company there: his society is much courted by the members; as, indeed, from the blandness of his manners, it could not fail to be.

Sir John, though not in the habit of attacking others, was fond of being attacked himself. His anxiety in this respect has often reminded me of the Irish at Donnybrook Fair. Many go there for the purpose of getting a broken head. If they come away without being soundly thrashed, they are quite disappointed. You can see from their very countenances, that they have suffered a negative calamity of no ordinary magnitude. You sometimes hear them accosting any athletic countryman they meet, with "Will you *bate* me?" I myself have repeatedly heard Irishmen in London expressing a wish that some one would have "a purty fight" with them. It was the same, on some occasions, with Sir John Elley in the House of Commons. You could not do him a greater favour than to attack him in good set terms. I have actually seen him literally implore honourable members to attack him. One day in the beginning of March last year, Mr. Hume, in bringing the subject of the late brevet before the House,

